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A STRANGE STORY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MY NOVEL," "RIENZI," &c.

CHAPTER XLVI.

JULIUS FABER and Amy Lloyd stayed in my house three days, and in their presence I felt a healthful sense of security and peace. Amy wished to visit her father's house, and I asked Faber, in taking her there, to seize the occasion to see Lillian, that he might communicate to me his impression of a case so peculiar. I prepared Mrs. Ashleigh for this visit by a previous note. When the old man and the child came back, both brought me comfort. Amy was charmed with Lillian, who had received her with the sweetness natural to her real character, and I loved to hear Lillian's praise from those innocent lips.

Faber's report was still more calculated to console me:

"I have seen, I have conversed with her long and familiarly. You were quite right, there is no tendency to consumption in that exquisite, if delicate, organisation; nor do I see cause for the fear to which your statement had preinclined me. That head is too nobly formed for any constitutional cerebral infirmity. In its organisation, ideality, wonder, veneration are large, it is true, but they are balanced by other organs, now perhaps almost dormant, but which will come into play as life passes from romance into duty. Something at this moment evidently oppresses her mind. In conversing with her, I observe abstraction—listlessness; but I am so convinced of her truthfulness, that if she has once told you she returned your affection, and pledged to you her faith, I should, in your place, rest perfectly satisfied that whatever be the cloud that now rests on her imagination, and for the time obscures the idea of yourself, it will pass away."

Faber was a believer in the main divisions of phrenology, though he did not accept all the dogmas of Gall and Spurzheim; while, to my mind, the refutation of phrenology in its fundamental propositions had been triumphantly established by the lucid arguments of Sir W. Hamilton.* But

* The summary of this distinguished lecturer's objections to phrenology is to be found in the Appendix to vol. i. of *Lectures on Metaphysics*, p. 404 et seq. Edition 1859.

when Faber rested on phrenological observations, assurances in honour of Lillian, I forgot Sir W. Hamilton, and believed in phrenology. As iron girders and pillars expand and contract with the mere variations of temperature, so will the strongest conviction on which the human intellect rests its judgment, vary with the changes of the human heart; and the building is only safe where these variations are foreseen and allowed for by a wisdom intent on self-knowledge.*

There was much in the affection that had sprung up between Julius Faber and Amy Lloyd which touched my heart and softened all its emotions. This man, unblessed, like myself, by conjugal and parental ties, had, in his solitary age, turned for solace to the love of a child, as I, in the prime of manhood, had turned to the love of woman. But his love was without fear, without jealousy, without trouble. My sunshine came to me, in a fitful ray, through clouds that had gathered over my noon; his sunshine covered all his landscape, hallowed and hallowing by the calm of declining day.

And Amy was no common child. She had no exuberant imagination; she was haunted by no whispers from Afar; she was a creature fitted for the earth, to accept its duties and to gladden its cares. Her tender observation, fine and tranquil, was alive to all the important household trifles, by which, at the earliest age, man's allotted soother asserts her privilege to tend and to comfort. It was pleasant to see her moving so noiselessly through the rooms I had devoted to her venerable protector, knowing all his simple wants, and providing for them as if by the mechanism of a heart exquisitely moulded to the loving uses of life. Sometimes when I saw her setting his chair by the window (knowing, as I did, how much he habitually loved to be near the light) and smoothing his papers (in which he was apt to be unmethodical), placing the mark in his book when he ceased to read, divining, almost without his glance, some wish passing through his mind, and then seating herself at his

* The change of length in iron girders caused by variation of temperature, has not unfrequently brought down the whole edifice into which they were admitted. Good engineers and architects allow for such changes produced by temperature. In the tubular bridge across the Menai Straits, a self-acting record of the daily amount of its contraction and expanse is ingeniously contrived.

feet, often with her work—which was always destined for him or for one of her absent brothers—now and then, with the one small book that she had carried with her, a selection of Bible stories compiled for children;—sometimes when I saw her thus, how I wished that Lilian, too, could have seen her, and have compared her own ideal phantasies with those young developments of the natural heavenly Woman!

But was there nothing in that sight from which I, proud of my arid reason even in its perplexities, might have taken lessons for myself?

On the second evening of Faber's visit I brought to him the draft of deeds for the sale of his property. He had never been a man of business out of his profession; he was impatient to sell his property, and disposed to accept an offer at half its value. I insisted on taking on myself the task of negotiator; perhaps, too, in this office I was egotistically anxious to prove to the great physician that that which he believed to be my "hallucination" had in no way obscured my common sense in the daily affairs of life. So I concluded, and in a few hours, terms for his property that were only just, but were infinitely more advantageous than had appeared to himself to be possible. But, as I approached him with the papers, he put his finger to his lips. Amy was standing by him with her little book in her hand, and his own Bible lay open on the table. He was reading to her from the Sacred Volume itself, and impressing on her the force and beauty of one of the Parables, the adaptation of which had perplexed her; when he had done, she kissed him, bade him good night, and went away to rest. Then said Faber thoughtfully, and as if to himself more than me,

"What a lovely bridge between old age and childhood is religion! How intuitively the child begins with prayer and worship on entering life, and how intuitively on quitting life the old man turns back to prayer and worship, putting himself again side by side with the infant!"

I made no answer, but, after a pause, spoke of fines and freeholds, title-deeds and money; and when the business on hand was concluded, asked my learned guest if, before he departed, he would deign to look over the pages of my ambitious Physiological Work. There were parts of it on which I much desired his opinion, touching on subjects in which his special studies made him an authority as high as our land possessed.

He made me bring him the manuscript, and devoted much of that night and the next day to its perusal.

When he gave it me back, which was not till the morning of his departure, he commenced with eulogies on the scope of its design and the manner of its execution, which flattered my vanity so much that I could not help exclaiming, "Then, at least, there is no trace of 'hallucination' here!"

"Alas, my poor Allen! here, perhaps, hallu-

ination, or self-deception, is more apparent than in all the strange tales you confided to me. For here is the hallucination of the man seated on the shores of Nature, and who would say to its measureless sea, 'So far shalt thou go and no farther!'—here is the hallucination of the creature, who, not content with exploring the laws of the Creator, ends with submitting to his interpretation of some three or four laws, in the midst of a code of which all the rest are in language unknown to him—the powers and free-will of the Lawgiver himself; here is the hallucination by which Nature is left Godless—because Man is left soulless. What would matter all our speculations on a Deity who would cease to exist for us when we are in the grave? Why mete out, like Archytas, the earth and the sea, and number the sands on the shore that divides them, if the end of this wisdom be a handful of dust sprinkled over a skull!

"Nec quidquam tibi prodest
Aeris tentasse domos, animoque rotundum
Percurrisse polum morituro."

Your book is a proof of the soul that you fail to discover. Without a soul, no man would work for a Future that begins for his fame when the breath is gone from his body. Do you remember how you saw that little child praying at the grave of her father? Shall I tell you that in her simple orisons she prayed for the benefactor—who had cared for the orphan; who had reared over dust that tomb which, in a Christian burial-ground, is a mute but perceptible memorial of Christian hopes; that the child prayed, haughty man, for you? And you sat by, knowing nought of this; sat by, amongst the graves, troubled and tortured with ghastly doubts—vain of a reason that was sceptical of eternity, and yet shaken like a reed by a moment's marvel. Shall I tell the child to pray for you no more?—that you disbelieve in a soul? If you do so, what is the efficacy of prayer? Speak, shall I tell her this? Shall the infant pray for you never more?"

I was silent; I was thrilled.

"Has it never occurred to you, who, in denying all innate perceptions as well as ideas, have passed on to deductions from which poor Locke, humble Christian that he was, would have shrunk in dismay; has it never occurred to you as a wonderful fact, that the easiest thing in the world to teach a child is that which seems to metaphysical schoolmen the abstrusest of all problems? Read all those philosophers wrangling about a First Cause, deciding on what *are* miracles, and then again deciding that such miracles cannot be; and when one has answered another, and left in the crucible of wisdom a *caput mortuum* of ignorance, then turn your eyes, and look at the infant praying to the invisible God at his mother's knees. This idea, so miraculously abstract, of a Power that the infant has never seen, that cannot be symbolled forth and explained to him by the most erudite sage,—a Power, nevertheless,

that watches over him, that hears him, that sees him, that will carry him across the grave, that will enable him to live on for ever;—this double mystery of a Divinity and of a Soul the infant learns with the most facile readiness, at the first glimpse of his reasoning faculty. Before you can teach him a rule in addition, before you can venture to drill him into his hornbook, he leaps, with one intuitive spring of all his ideas, to the comprehension of the truths which are only incomprehensible to blundering sages! And you, as you stand before me, dare not say, 'Let the child pray for me no more!' But will the Creator accept the child's prayer for the man who refuses prayer for himself? Take my advice—Pray! And in this counsel I do not overstep my province. I speak not as a preacher, but as a physician. For health is a word that comprehends our whole organisation, and a just equilibrium of all faculties and functions is the condition of health. As in your Lillian the equilibrium is deranged by the over-indulgence of a spiritual mysticism which withdraws from the nutriment of duty the essential pabulum of sober sense, so in you, the resolute negation of disciplined spiritual communion between Thought and Divinity robs imagination of its noblest and safest vent. Thus, from opposite extremes, you and your Lillian meet in the same region of mist and cloud, losing sight of each other and of the true ends of life, as her eyes only gaze on the stars and yours only bend to the earth. Were I advising *her*, I should say: 'Your Creator has placed the scene of your trial below, and not in the stars.' Advising *you*, I say: 'But in the trial below, man should recognise education for heaven.' In a word, I would draw somewhat more downward her fancy, raise somewhat more upward your reason. Take my advice then—Pray. Your mental system needs the support of prayer in order to preserve its balance. In the embarrassment and confusion of your senses, clearness of perception will come with habitual and tranquil confidence in Him who alike rules the universe and reads the heart. I only say here what has been said much better before by a reasoner in whom all students of Nature recognise a guide. I see on your table the very volume of Bacon which contains the passage I commend to your reflection. Here it is. Listen: 'Take an example of a dog, and mark what a generosity and courage he will put on when he finds himself maintained by a man who, to him, is instead of a God, or *melior natura*, which courage is manifestly such as that creature, without that confidence of a better nature than his own, could never attain. So man, when he resteth and assevereth himself upon divine protection and favour, gathereth a force and faith which human nature could not obtain.*' You are silent, but your ges-

* Bacon's Essay on Atheism. This quotation is made with admirable felicity and force by Dr. Whewell, page 378 of *Bridgewater Treatise, on Astronomy and General Physics considered with Reference to Natural Theology*.

ture tells me your doubt—a doubt which your heart, so femininely tender, will not speak aloud lest you should rob the old man of a hope with which your strength of manhood dispenses—you doubt the efficacy of prayer! Pause and reflect, bold but candid inquirer into the laws of that guide you call Nature. If there were no efficacy in prayer—if prayer were as mere an illusion of superstitious phantasy as aught against which your reason now struggles—do you think that Nature herself would have made it amongst the most common and facile of all her dictates? Do you believe that if there really did not exist that tie between Man and his Maker—that link between life here and a life hereafter which is found in what we call Soul, alone—that wherever you look through the universe, you would behold a child at prayer? Nature inculcates nothing that is superfluous. Nature does not impel the leviathan, or the lion, the eagle or the moth, to pray; she impels only man. Why? Because man only has soul, and Soul seeks to commune with the Everlasting, as a fountain struggles up to its source. Burn your book. It would found you a reputation for learning and intellect and courage, I allow; but learning and intellect and courage wasted against a Truth—like spray against a rock! A Truth valuable to the world, the world will never part with. You will not injure the truth, but you will mislead and may destroy many, whose best security is in the Truth which you so eruditely insinuate to be a fable. Soul and Hereafter are the heritage of all men; the humblest journeyman in those streets, the pettiest trader behind those counters, have in those beliefs their prerogatives of royalty. You would dethrone and embrate the lords of the earth by your theories. For my part, having given the greater part of my life to the study and analysis of facts, I would rather be the author of the tritest homily, of the baldest poem, that inculcated that imperishable essence of the soul to which I have neither scalpel nor probe—than be the founder of the subtlest school, or the framer of the loftiest verse, that robbed my fellow-men of their faith in a spirit that eludes the dissecting-knife, in a being that escapes the gravedigger. Burn your book—Accept This Book instead; Read and Pray."

He placed his Bible in my hand, embraced me, and, an hour afterwards, the old man and the child left my hearth solitary once more.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THAT night as I sat in my study, very thoughtful and very mournful, I revolved all that Julius Faber had said, and the impression his words had produced became gradually weaker and weaker, as my reason, naturally combative, rose up with all the replies which my philosophy suggested. No! if my imagination had really seduced and betrayed me into monstrous credulities, it was clear that the best remedy to such morbid tendencies towards the Superstitious was in the severe exercise of the faculties most opposed to

Superstition; in the culture of pure reasoning; in the science of absolute fact. Accordingly, I placed before me the very book which Julius Faber had advised me to burn; I forced all my powers of mind to go again over the passages which contained the doctrines that his admonition had censured; and, before daybreak, I had stated the substance of his argument, and the logical reply to it, in an elaborate addition to my chapter on "Sentimental Philosophers." While thus rejecting the purport of his parting counsels, I embodied in another portion of my work his views on my own "illusions," and as here my common sense was in concord with his, I disposed of all my own previous doubts in an addition to my favourite chapter "On the Cheats of the Imagination." And when the pen dropped from my hand, and the day-star gleamed through the window, my heart escaped from the labour of my mind, and flew back to the image of Lilian. The pride of the philosopher died out of me, the sorrow of the man reigned supreme, and I shrank from the coming of the sun, despondent.

[CHAPTER XLVIII.]

Nor till the law had completed its proceedings and satisfied the public mind as to the murder of Sir Philip Derval, were the remains of the deceased consigned to the family mausoleum. The funeral was, as may be supposed, strictly private, and when it was over, the excitement caused by an event so tragical and singular, subsided. New topics engaged the public talk, and—in my presence, at least—the delicate consideration due to one whose name had been so painfully mixed up in the dismal story, forbore a topic which I could not be expected to hear without distressful emotion. Mrs. Ashleigh I saw frequently at my own house; she honestly confessed that Lilian had not shown that grief at the cancelling of our engagement which would alone justify Mrs. Ashleigh in asking me again to see her daughter, and retract my conclusions against our union. She said that Lilian was quiet, not uncheerful, never spoke of me nor of Margrave, but seemed absent and preoccupied as before, taking pleasure in nothing that had been wont to please her; not in music, nor books, nor that tranquil pastime which women call work, and in which they find excuse to meditate, in idleness, their own fancies. She rarely stirred out—even in the garden—when she did, her eyes seemed to avoid the house in which Margrave had lodged, and her steps the old favourite haunt by the Monks' Well. She would remain silent for long hours together, but the silence did not appear melancholy. For the rest, her health was more than usually good. Still, Mrs. Ashleigh persisted in her belief that, sooner or later, Lilian would return to her former self, her former sentiments for me, and she entreated me not as yet to let the world know that our engagement was broken off. "For if," said she, with good sense, "if it should prove not to be broken off, only suspended, and afterwards happily renewed, there

will be two stories to tell when no story be needed. Besides, I should dread the effect on Lilian, if offensive gossips babbled to her on a matter that would excite so much curiosity as the rupture of a union in which our neighbours have taken so general an interest."

I had no reason to refuse acquiescence in Mrs. Ashleigh's request, but I did not share in her hopes; I felt that the fair prospects of my life were blasted; I could never love another, never wed another; I resigned myself to a solitary hearth, rejoiced, at least, that Margrave had not revisited at Mrs. Ashleigh's; had not, indeed, reappeared in the town. He was still staying with Strahan, who told me that his guest had ensconced himself in Forman's old study, and amused himself with reading—though not for long at a time—the curious old books and manuscripts found in the library, or climbing trees like a schoolboy, and familiarising himself with the deer and the cattle, which would group round him quite tame, and feed from his hand. Was this the description of a criminal? But if Sir Philip's assertion were really true; if the criminal were man without soul; if without soul, man would have no conscience, never be troubled by repentance, and the vague dread of a future world,—why, then, should not the criminal be gay despite his crimes, as the white bear gambols as friskily after his meal on human flesh? These questions would haunt me despite my determination to accept as the right solution of all marvels the construction put on my narrative by Julius Faber.

Days passed; I saw and heard nothing of Margrave! I began half to hope that, in the desultory and rapid changes of mood and mind which characterised his restless nature, he had forgotten my existence.

One morning I went out early on my rounds, when I met Strahan unexpectedly.

"I was in search of you," he said, "for more than one person has told me that you are looking ill and jaded. So you are! And the town now is hot and unhealthy. You must come to Derval Court for a week or so. You can ride into town every day to see your patients. Don't refuse. Margrave, who is still with me, sends all kind messages, and bade me say that *he* entreats you to come to the house at which he also is a guest!"

I started. What had the *Scin-Læca* required of me, and obtained to that condition my promise? "If you are asked to the house at which I also am a guest, you will come; you will meet and converse with me as guest speaks to guest in the house of a host!" Was this one of the coincidences which my reason was bound to accept as coincidences and nothing more? Tut, tut! Was I returning again to my "hallucinations?" Granting that Faber and common sense were in the right, what was this Margrave? A man to whose friendship, acuteness, and energy I was under the deepest obligations; to whom I was indebted for active services that had saved

my life from a serious danger, acquitted my honour of a horrible suspicion. "I thank you," I said to Strahan, "I will come; not, indeed, for a week, but, at all events, for a day or two."

"That's right; I will call for you in the carriage at six o'clock. You will have done your day's work by then?"

"Yes, I will so arrange."

On our way to Derval Court that evening, Strahan talked much about Margrave, of whom, nevertheless, he seemed to be growing weary.

"His high spirits are too much for one," said he; "and then so restless—so incapable of sustained quiet conversation. And, clever though he is, he can't help me in the least about the new house I shall build. He has no notion of construction. I don't think he could build a barn."

"I thought you did not like to demolish the old house, and would content yourself with pulling down the more ancient part of it?"

"True. At first it seemed a pity to destroy so handsome a mansion; but you see, since poor Sir Philip's manuscript, on which he set such store, has been too mutilated, I fear, to allow me to effect his wish with regard to it, I think I ought, at least, scrupulously to obey his other whims. And, besides—I don't know—there are odd noises about the old house. I don't believe in haunted houses, still there is something dreary in strange sounds at the dead of night, even if made by rats, or winds through decaying rafters. You, I remember at college, had a taste for architecture, and can draw plans. I wish to follow out Sir Philip's design, but on a smaller scale, and with more attention to comfort."

Thus he continued to run on, satisfied to find me a silent and attentive listener. We arrived at the mansion an hour before sunset, the westering light shining full against the many windows cased in mouldering pilasters, and making the general dilapidation of the whole place yet more mournfully evident.

It was but a few minutes to the dinner-hour. I went up at once to the room appropriated to me—not the one I had before occupied. Strahan had already got together a new establishment. I was glad to find in the servant who attended me an old acquaintance. He had been in my own employ when I first settled at L—, and left me to get married. He and his wife were now both in Strahan's service. He spoke warmly of his new master and his contentment with his situation, while he unpacked my carpet-bag and assisted me to change my dress. But the chief object of his talk and his praise was Mr. Margrave.

"Such a bright young gentleman, like the first fine day in May!"

When I entered the drawing-room, Margrave and Strahan were both there. The former was blithe and genial, as usual, in his welcome. At dinner, and during the whole evening till we retired severally to our own rooms, he was the principal talker; recounting incidents of travel, always very loosely strung together, jesting, good

humouredly enough, at Strahan's sudden hobby for building, then putting questions to me about mutual acquaintances, but never waiting for an answer, and every now and then, as if at random, startling us with some brilliant aphorism or some suggestion drawn from abstract science or unfamiliar erudition. The whole effect was sparkling, but I could well understand, that if long continued, it would become oppressive. The soul has need of pauses of repose—intervals of escape not only from the flesh, but even from the mind. A man of the loftiest intellect will experience times when mere intellect not only fatigues him, but amidst its most original conceptions, amidst its proudest triumphs, has a something trite and common-place compared with one of those vague intimations of a spiritual destiny which are not within the ordinary domain of reason; and, gazing abstractedly into space, will leave suspended some problem of severest thought, or uncompleted some golden palace of imperial poetry, to indulge in hazy reveries that do not differ from those of an innocent quiet child! The soul has a long road to travel—from time through eternity. It demands its halting hours of contemplation. Contemplation is serene. But with such wants of an immortal immaterial spirit, Margrave had no fellowship, no sympathy; and for myself, I need scarcely add that the lines I have just traced I should not have written at the date at which my narrative has now arrived.

CHAPTER XLIX.

I HAD no case that necessitated my return to L— the following day. The earlier hours of the forenoon I devoted to Strahan and his building plans. Margrave flitted in and out of the room fitfully as an April sunbeam, sometimes flinging himself on a sofa and reading for a few minutes one of the volumes of the ancient mystics, in which Sir Philip's library was so rich. I remember it was a volume of Proclus. He read that crabbed and difficult Greek with a fluency that surprised me. "I picked up the ancient Greek," said he, "years ago, in learning the modern." But the book soon tired him; then he would come and disturb us, archly enjoying Strahan's peevishness at interruption; then he would throw open the window and leap down, chanting one of his wild savage airs; and in another moment he was half hid under the drooping boughs of a broad lime-tree, amidst the antlers of deer that gathered fondly round him. In the afternoon my host was called away to attend some visitors of importance, and I found myself on the sward before the house, right in view of the mausoleum, and alone with Margrave.

I turned my eyes from that dumb House of Death wherein rested the corpse of the last lord of the soil, so strangely murdered, with a strong desire to speak out to Margrave the doubts respecting himself that tortured me. But, setting aside the promise to the contrary, which I had given, or dreamed I had given, to the Luminous

Shadow—to fulfil that desire would have been impossible—impossible to any one gazing on that radiant youthful face!—I think I see him now as I saw him then; a white doe, that even my presence could not scare away from him, clung lovingly to his side, looking up at him with her soft eyes. He stood there like the incarnate principle of mythological sensuous life. I have before applied to him that illustration; let the repetition be pardoned. Impossible, I repeat it, to say to that creature, face to face, “Art thou the master of demoniac arts and the instigator of secret murder?” As if from redundant happiness within himself, he was humming, or rather cooing, a strain of music, so sweet, so sweet, so wildly sweet, and so unlike the music one hears from tutored lips in crowded rooms! I passed my hand over my forehead in bewilderment and awe.

“Are there,” I said, unconsciously—“are there, indeed, such prodigies in Nature?”

“Nature!” he cried, catching up the word; “talk to me of Nature! Talk of her, the wondrous blissful Mother! Mother I may well call her. I am her spoiled child, her darling—But oh, to die, ever to die, ever to lose sight of Nature!—to rot, senseless, whether under these turfs or within those dead walls—”

I could not resist the answer:

“Like yon murdered man! murdered, and by whom?”

“By whom? I thought that was clearly proved!”

“The hand was proved; what influence moved the hand?”

“Tush! the poor wretch spoke of a Demon! Who can tell? Nature herself is a grand destroyer. See that pretty bird, in its beak a writhing worm! All Nature’s children live to take life;* none, indeed, so lavishly as man. What hecatombs slaughtered, not to satisfy the irresistible sting of hunger, but for the wanton ostentation of a feast, which he may scarcely taste, or for the mere sport that he finds in destroying. We speak with dread of the beasts of prey: what beast of prey is so dire a ravager as man? So cruel and so treacherous? Look at yon flock of sheep, bred and fattened for the shambles; and this hind that I caress,—if I were the park-keeper, and her time for my bullet had come, would you think her life was the safer because, in my own idle whim, I had tamed her to trust to the hand raised to slay her?”

* May I be pardoned, since Allen Fenwick does not confute, in his reply, the trite fallacy contained in Margrave’s remarks on the destroying agency of Nature, if I earnestly commend to the general reader the careful perusal of chapter xiii., page 129, of Dr. Buckland’s *Bridgewater Treatise* (Geology and Mineralogy) on the “Aggregate of animal enjoyment increased and that of pain diminished by the existence of carnivorous races.” Nothing to my mind can surpass the terseness and simplicity with which the truth of that proposition is worked out to the vindication of the great drama of universal life.

“It is true,” said I, “a grim truth. Nature, on the surface so loving and so gentle, is full of terror in her depths when our thought descends into their abyss!”

Strahan now joined us with a party of country visitors.

“Margrave is the man to show you the beauties of this park,” said he. “Margrave knows every bosk and dingle, twisted old thorn-tree, or opening glade, in its intricate, undulating ground.”

Margrave seemed delighted at this proposition, and as he led us through the park, though the way was long, though the sun was fierce, no one seemed fatigued. For the pleasure he felt in pointing out detached beauties which escaped an ordinary eye was contagious. He did not talk as talks the poet or the painter: but at some lovely effect of light amongst the tremulous leaves, some sudden glimpse of a sportive rivulet below, he would halt, point it out to us in silence, and with a kind of childlike ecstasy in his own bright face, that seemed to reflect the life and the bliss of the blithe summer-day itself.

Thus seen, all my doubts in his dark secret nature faded away; all my horror, all my hate; it was impossible to resist the charm that breathed round him, not to feel a tender, affectionate yearning towards him as to some fair happy child. Well might he call himself the Darling of Nature. Was he not the mysterious likeness of that awful Mother, beautiful as Apollo in one aspect, direful as Typhon in another?

CHAPTER I.

“WHAT a strange-looking cane you have, sir,” said a little girl, who was one of the party, and who had entwined her arm round Margrave’s. “Let me look at it.”

“Yes,” said Strahan; “that cane, or rather walking-staff, is worth looking at. Margrave bought it in Egypt, and declares that it is very ancient.”

This staff seemed constructed from a reed; looked at, it seemed light, in the hand it felt heavy; it was of a pale, faded yellow, wrought with black rings at equal distances, and graven with half obliterated characters that seemed hieroglyphic. I remembered to have seen Margrave with it before, but I had never noticed it with any attention till now, when it was passed from hand to hand. At the head of the cane there was a large unpolished stone of a dark blue.

“Is this a pebble or a jewel?” asked one of the party.

“I cannot tell you its name or nature,” said Margrave; “but it is said to cure the bite of serpents,* and has other supposed virtues—a talisman, in short.”

* The following description of a stone at Corfu, celebrated as an antidote to the venom of the serpent’s bite, was given to me by an eminent scholar and legal functionary in that island:

“DESCRIPTION OF THE BLUE STONE.—This stone is of an oval shape, $1\frac{1}{10}$ in. long, $\frac{7}{10}$ broad, $\frac{1}{10}$ thick,

He here placed the staff in my hands, and bade me look at it with care. Then he changed the conversation and renewed the way, leaving the staff with me, till, suddenly, I forced it back on him. I could not have explained why, but its touch, as it warmed in my clasp, seemed to send through my whole frame a singular thrill, and a sensation as if I no longer felt my own weight—as if I walked on air.

Our rambles came to a close; the visitors went away; I re-entered the house through the sash-window of Forman's study; Margrave threw his hat and staff on the table, and amused himself with examining minutely the tracery on the mantelpiece. Strahan and myself left him thus occupied, and going into the adjoining library, resumed our task of examining the plans for the new house. I continued to draw outlines and sketches of various alterations tending to simplify and contract Sir Philip's general design. Margrave soon joined us, and, this time, took his seat patiently beside our table, watching me use ruler and compass with unwonted attention.

"I wish I could draw," he said, "but I can do nothing useful."

"Rich men like you," said Strahan, peevishly, "can engage others, and are better employed in rewarding good artists than in making bad drawings themselves."

"Yes, I can employ others; and—Fenwick, when you have finished with Strahan, I will

and, having been broken formerly, is now set in gold.

"When a person is bitten by a poisonous snake, the bite must be opened by a cut of a lancet or razor long ways, and the stone applied within twenty-four hours. The stone then attaches itself firmly on the wound, and when it has done its office falls off; the cure is then complete. The stone must then be thrown into milk, whereupon it vomits the poison it has absorbed, which remains green on the top of the milk, and the stone is then again fit for use.

"This stone has been from time immemorial in the family of Ventura, of Corfu, a house of Italian origin, and is notorious, so that peasants immediately apply for its aid. Its virtue has not been impaired by the fracture. Its nature or composition is unknown.

"In a case where two were stung at the same time by serpents, the stone was applied to one, who recovered, but the other, for whom it could not be used, died.

"It never failed but once, and then it was applied *after* the twenty-four hours.

"Its colour is so dark as not to be distinguished from black. "P. M. COLQUHOUN.

"Corfu, 7th Nov., 1860."

Sir Emerson Tennent, in his popular and excellent work on Ceylon, gives an account of "snake stones" apparently similar to the one at Corfu, except that they are "intensely black and highly polished," and which are applied, in much the same manner, to the wounds inflicted by the cobra capella.

Query—Might it not be worth while to ascertain the chemical properties of these stones, and, if they be efficacious in the extraction of venom conveyed by a bite, might they not be as successful if applied to the bite of a mad dog as to that of a cobra capella?

ask permission to employ you, though without reward; the task I would impose will not take you a minute."

He then threw himself back in his chair, and seemed to fall into a doze.

The dressing-bell rang; Strahan put away the plans—indeed, they were now pretty well finished and decided on.

Margrave woke up as our host left the room to dress, and drawing me towards another table in the room, placed before me one of his favourite mystic books, and, pointing to an old woodcut, said:

"I will ask you to copy this for me; it pretends to be a fac-simile of Solomon's famous seal. I have a whimsical desire to have a copy of it. You observe two triangles interlaced and inserted in a circle? The pentacle, in short. Yes, just so. You need not add the astrological characters, they are the senseless superfluous accessories of the dreamer who wrote the book. But the pentacle itself has an intelligible meaning; it belongs to the only universal language, the language of symbol, in which all races that think—around, and above, and below us—can establish communion of thought. If in the external universe any one constructive principle can be detected, it is the geometrical; and in every part of the world in which magic pretends to a written character, I find that its hieroglyphics are geometrical figures. Is it not laughable that the most positive of all the sciences should thus lend its angles and circles to the use of—what shall I call it?—the ignorance?—ay, that is the word—the ignorance of dealers in magic!"

He took up the paper on which I had hastily described the triangles and the circle, and went out of the room, chanting the serpent-charmer's song.

AMERICAN DISUNION.

WITH the heartiest good will for all transatlantic Englishmen wherever in America they may be settled, and with a hope that they who are now opposing sword to sword and will not be subdued one by the other, may suffer themselves to be subdued by the divine message of peace and good will among men that is now bidding us all to Christmas cheer, we speak of American disunion. Let it be permitted us, outside the heat of strife, to see what is for a short season hidden from the combatants, and let us not be thought unfriendly to our neighbours if the events that are happening recal to us the forebodings of their chosen guides, the founders of the Union now parting, as it seems, rather by advance of development than by an act of ruin, into two separate sovereignties. If any ruin come after fair acknowledgment of the division of character and interest between the Northern and the Southern States of the late Union, it will come, not of the natural partition, but of the unnatural and unavailing struggle to

prevent it, and perhaps even of the too reckless disposition that may drag more than the first combatants into the strife.

The founders of the American constitution doubted whether the Federation of no more than the thirteen original States was not too large to retain identity of interests and stay under one rule. "But let experience," said Washington, in one of his letters, "solve the question; to listen to speculation in such a case were criminal." Sixty years ago, Jefferson, who in some respects represents more than Washington the present mind of the republic, touched on the possible event that now has happened. In eighteen 'three, when some expected from the acquisition of Louisiana, future division of the Union into an Atlantic and a Mississippi Confederacy, he said—what a year ago there was no statesman in the North wise enough to repeat after him—"Let them part by all means if it is for their happiness to do so. It is but the elder and the younger son differing. God bless them both, and keep them in union if it be for their good, but separate them if better." And again, forty years ago, in eighteen 'twenty, the Missouri question produced from him these pregnant words: "Although I had laid down as a law to myself, never to write, talk, or even think of politics, to know nothing of public affairs, and therefore had ceased to read newspapers, yet this Missouri question aroused and filled me with alarm. The old schism of Federal and Republican threatened nothing, because it existed in every State, and united them together by the fraternism of party; but the coincidence of a marked principle, moral and political, with a geographical line, once conceived, I feared would never more be obliterated from the mind; that it would be recurring on every occasion, and renewing irritations until it would kindle such mutual and mortal hatred as to render separation preferable to eternal discord. I have ever been among the most sanguine in believing that our union would be of long duration; I now doubt it much, and see the event at no great distance. My only comfort and confidence is, that I shall not live to see this." What Jefferson expected, has occurred.

In 'twenty-six, upon a petty quarrel touching her dealings with the Indian tribes, Georgia threatened secession and a Southern Confederacy. In 'thirty-one, South Carolina nearly formed one in the course of resistance to a protective tariff, and she would then have seceded but for compromise. Tariffs and questions of Slave and Free States, that are simple questions of the balance of political power, have been throughout the great dividing questions, and the Potomac, on either side of which the North and South have arrayed their tens of thousands one against each other, represents fairly enough the line of geographical division.

The inevitable partition has been seen and foretold by more than one thoughtful traveller of late. De Tocqueville prophesied no undivided permanence for a republic so unwieldy. Mr. Colley Grattan, a few years ago, came home

from America, and wrote that "the districts of South, North, and West, are joined like some wall of incongruous material, with a cement insufficient to secure perpetual cohesion. They will inevitably crumble into confusion, though no man may foretell the period of dissolution." So apparent was the coming change, that the Russian writer Ivan Golovin, after a visit to America, told us six years ago, "I do not give the Union six years to last." And Mr. Sterling, in his letter from the Slave States, published four years ago, described some of the elements of change, and said, "It appears to me, that amid so many elements of uncertainty in the future, both from the excited state of men's minds in the States themselves, and the complication of surrounding circumstances, no wise man would venture to foretell the probable issue of American affairs during the next four years." The four years have indeed now come to their close in civil war.

Not only were there conflicting interests of North and South, but they told forcibly upon conflicting characters. Colonisation of the North was by the sternest of the Puritans. That of the South was by the proudest and most reckless of the Cavaliers. The men who resisted excess of authority in religion and politics, settled where, as in England, there are sharp vicissitudes of climate, and where, therefore, by energy and active daily labour, wealth or livelihood had to be conquered. The men who delighted in ungoverned authority, settled among the luxuries of a tropical climate that invited them to ease, and where slave labour poured at their feet the wealth of a rich soil. Thus in ungoverned authority over their slaves, and in the ease of a luxurious land, the spirit of the Cavaliers became intensified, and in their scorn of hand-labour, or anything so mean as copper money, the lords of the South became a race contrasting more strongly than ever with the active, bustling, cent-getting, and authority-defying sons of the Pilgrim Fathers.

The American constitution was framed by slaveholders for a slaveholding republic. But the accidents of soil and climate, making slave labour comparatively useless north of a certain latitude, and apparently convenient south of it, joined with the ever widening difference of character in the two populations to clear of slavery the states of the North and concentrate it in the South.

Then came the political conflicts, in which participation of the best men was ever less and less active. "It is a well-authenticated fact," said De Tocqueville, "that at the present day the most talented men in the United States are very rarely placed at the head of affairs. The race of American statesmen has evidently dwindled most remarkably in the course of the last fifty years." When that was said, there were still Webster, Clay, and Calhoun to be named. Now we are among Tylers, Polks, and Pierces. Yet there has been no dwindling of American intellect. The evil is that the pursuit of politics has been degraded into a trade,

in which the conditions of American statesmanship enable hordes of needy and unprincipled adventurers to speculate. These men fill at a presidential contest the election committees, which name delegates for the convention that has to choose a party candidate. The members of the party convention come from sections of the country widely apart, and with diverse interests. Every man of ability has by his vigorous action on some question offended this or that section. Ballot follows ballot, and the lot falls at last on the man who is too insignificant to have made enemies. The work of a presidential election is thus done by two opposing packs of place-hunters, each in full cry, and the pack that runs down its game demands immediately after to be fed. The greed of office by the noisiest political adventurers, and the consequent insecurity of office in place-holders, confines the desire, and secures too commonly the rewards, of place to the least worthy, to hungry men eager, especially during their short tenure of official life, to thrive by the plunder that every honest statesman of the North has during the present year had loudly to deplore. In the Chicago manifesto, a creed of the Northern party, we read censure of "the reckless extravagance which pervades every department of the Federal government," of "the systematic plunder of the public treasury by favoured partisans," and of "the recent startling developments of fraud and corruption at the Federal capital." The lobbies of the legislative halls are thronged with agents who, by appeal to the self-interest of members, undertake to work private bills through congress. A needy political adventurer, who has become a paid legislator at three or four dollars a day, and is required to live at the present scale of social extravagance, is, as every American legislator knows, and as members are constantly reminded in the course of debate, open to the influence of what is called "lobbying." He goes to market with his duty to his country. And from a house so constituted, all the ministers are required to be absent. They are not there to inform the representatives of the people, or to be made answerable to them for their deeds. Against the will of the whole American public, and of both houses of Congress, an American ministry can, if it be of one mind with the President, remain in office and authority during the four years of his rule. There is much that is most true and admirable in the theory of the American constitution, but it is one that can only be worked successfully by honest men, and of late years the constitutional monarchy of England has fulfilled far more completely all the practical conditions of a republic than the Federal Union of America. And it would not, we think, be difficult to show that the very unwieldiness of the Union since it has advanced from its original dimensions to the measure of a continent, has been the cause of those defects in the machinery of government, out of which comes the weakness that rushed into civil war, for the prevention of a natural and wholesome and inevitable self-adjustment of the country. The faults of American politics

—at any rate in the North—arise from point of character which are so far from being necessary motives to error that they would doubtless produce, within manageable bounds, one of the best and strongest governments under the sun. For want, however, of better statesmanship, the country is now pouring out some of its best life-blood in a war, of which the only good result conceivable is sharper and exacter marking of the natural line of demarcation between the opposing interests, and a more unquestionable establishment of the division of sovereignty than might have been the work of friendly understanding.

The Union first consisted of thirteen little societies on the Atlantic side of North America. It consists now of two great opposing powers, from which, after their accepted disruption, a great western region on the shores of the Pacific is again likely to fall off into quiet independence. The struggle between North and South has been of long duration. South having the lead in the federation, had fought some hard political battles to retain it, and had already been beaten on some vital points. But at the last presidential election, which was a trial of strength distinctly between South and North, the South considering itself finally subjected to the North within the federation, carried out its frequent threat and desire of secession.

Virginia was "the old dominion" once yielding so many statesmen to the Union that she was called "the Mother of Presidents." Washington, founder of the Union, lies in Virginian soil; the federal capital also was Virginian, and in the first days of the federal republic, the only one of the thirteen states entirely without slavery was Massachusetts. Meanwhile, there was a constant stream of labour from the old world to the new. White emigrants from Northern Europe poured into the North. Negroes were brought from Africa to the plantations of the South. The extinction of the slave trade and the clearing of slavery from the Northern States, as both unnecessary to the soil and climate, and repugnant to the temper of the Northern people, made the differences greater yet. There was no more flow of added population from without into the plantation lands. At the same time, over the North the tide of free immigration flowed with constantly increasing force. While the breach was becoming wider between social feeling and political interests of North and South, the old balance of population was being greatly changed. The North was rapidly outnumbering the South. Representation was by population. The number required to return a representative, at first thirty-three thousand, is now above one hundred and twenty thousand. Virginia used to return ten members, New York, six; at one time Virginia returned twenty-three, now she returns eleven members, New York thirty. South Carolina, when the constitution was established, stood for a thirtieth in the representation. Before the secession she stood only for a sixtieth. Long since, therefore, outnumbered in the House

of Representatives, where relative population was the basis of election, the South fought its battles in the senate, because there the balance of parties was proportioned to the relative number of the states.

It is this fact which gave all its political interest to the slave question. The numbers of the free and of the slave states being about equal, the question of free or slave, in admission of a new state or territory to the Union, was a question of political power between North and South, where, as we shall see presently, commercial interests of the two sides were opposed on many points of moment, and each sought power to make the laws in its own favour. This consideration alone gave its importance to the question that arose when Missouri applied for admission to the Union. The literal question of slave labour in Missouri hardly entered into any man's thought. The land in Missouri is not very suitable, and was not required, for more plantations; it was a question of balance of power between the men of two halves of a great continent who had strongly divided views of their own interests, but who were bound to submit to one code of commercial policy. Each half desired to have the making of that code, by getting possession of the legislative and executive. The South had lost the House of Representatives, but had on its side, by uncertain tenure, both the Senate and the President. When the question of Missouri arose, a new free state would have been fatal to the influence of the South in the senate, a new slave state was reassurance of its strength. Secession was then threatened. But by compromise Missouri was admitted as a slave state, with the understanding that the latitude 36 deg. 30 sec. should thenceforth be a boundary line as to this question between South and North. The creditable annexation of Texas gave the South further assurance of power, but this again led to the Mexican war and extension of the Union along the Pacific shores. Thereupon the discovery of gold in California, as well as the Irish famine, produced a new energy of free white immigration.

The North, if it had not been divided into its own factions, would now have been irresistible. But use could be made of Northern faction in the Southern interests. What are called the Republicans of the North represent its Conservative and Protectionist party, which include whatever is reckoned as the aristocracy. These are opposed by the South, partly because they represent the strength of the free states, partly because they are protectionist where protection is not to the interest of Southern trade. Against the Republicans, therefore, the Southern party has fought, and has been able often to prevail, even in the House of Representatives, by coalition with the Northern democrats. But in the midst of all this painful balancing of interests there came the last presidential election. Every Northern state voted for Mr. Lincoln. Every Southern state voted against him. Jefferson had said long ago that "a geographical line, coincid-

ing with a marked principle, moral and political, once conceived and held up to the angry passions of men, will never be obliterated, and every irritation will make it deeper and deeper." Here was the geographical line distinctly chosen for the demarcation of two rival interests. The Northern States had one hundred and eighty-three votes; the Southern one hundred and twenty. The North had shown that it could act in a mass and be irresistible as the stronger half in ill-assorted union. Then the South, feeling that within the Union the staff had finally gone from its hands, determined to withdraw from a federal compact that imposed on it a government hostile in spirit and adverse in policy to its commercial interest.

The North was not to blame for its triumph. It had become simply impossible that one government could satisfy both North and South. Had the South in these days of strongly marked antagonism dominated as completely over the North as the North had at last shown itself able to dominate over the South, there would have been still the opposed armies of the Potomac, the difference being that New York, and not New Orleans, would be the chief town in Secession.

It has been the fault of living American statesmen that they could not see when it was living and large before their eyes, a political necessity foreseen by the great founders of their constitution as the probable issue of differences even much less extreme than those which have been created by the later sequence of events. How little the actual extension of slavery was concerned in the discussion whether a new territory should be free or slave, is shown in the case of New Mexico. This territory has been organised more than ten years. It lies at the extreme south, and adjoins a slave state; its soil as well as its climate are suitable for slave labour; it is open to slavery, which is protected there by the Supreme Court of the United States. Yet in ten years this region, four times as large as England, has acquired a population of but twenty-two slaves, and of these only twelve are domiciled. And, urges MR. SPENCE (from whose excellent recent book on the American Union we draw much of our argument), in the cry against New Mexican slavery, are we to suppose that the conscience of the North is so framed that it grieves over this poor dozen, at the same time that it endures four millions close at home?" That it endures, we may add, more than three thousand in the district of Columbia itself, the capital district of the Union, lying unshielded by the constitution in the absolute control of congress. But we may go on to show more clearly that, hateful as all slavery is, and most desirable above all things as is the advent of the day when there shall be no more slaves, white or black, a high moral consideration of the evils of slavery on one side, and a highly immoral determination to prolong them on the other, is neither the root nor the fruit of the deplorable war now raging in America. We have dealt with the dry seeds of strife, let us ob-

serve next how they struck root and grew to be the deadly thing we see.

We are all of one mind, and of a right mind, in England as to the evil of slavery. It is an evil to the slave; it is an evil to the slaveholder himself. Where negro slaves work on the soil, the dignity of labour is denied; it is thought shame for a white man to live by the sweat of his own brow, and the whites not rich enough to possess blacks, upon whose industry they live, fall into a large, miserable, shiftless class, known as the "mean whites," and despised by the very negro. This poor, shiftless, despised middle class consists of the very men who are the strength and backbone of all free society. There is but one field of industry—the plantation—and industry is brought from without to occupy it. There could be no more fatal blow dealt to the South than this that comes of the working of its own "peculiar institution." But the North is really fighting not to destroy or confine, but to claim its right of continued participation in this institution. The Southern planter, holding his slave to be property, desires security in its possession, and that he had and can only have under the sort of union from which, on other accounts, he has withdrawn.

The constitution of the United States, framed by slaveowners, gave the whole might of the Union for suppression of slave insurrection. It provided also for the capture and restoration into bondage of any escaped slave. The capital of the Union that the North fights to maintain is a slave-holding city, and its Federal court decrees slavery to be a prison with walls wide as the country. Within the Union there was and there would be, were the Union restored, no place of lawful hope for the fugitive from a thralldom which every man has a just right to throw off if he can. If, therefore, detestation of slavery were really the animating spirit of the North, it should rejoice at a division by which it is parted for ever from the unclean thing, and enabled, like England, to declare every man free whose foot touches its soil. But instead of re-joining to be clear of the taint, instead of exulting at a change which confines the slave system to the slave-holding states, and not only absolves the North from the degrading duties of slave-catcher, but gives it a chance of strangling the whole system of slave labour with a girdle of freedom, the states of the North fight—if for anything at all in the way of slavery, for nothing but continuance of their participation in the wrong. The South, instead of seceding for the sake of slavery, secedes in spite of the fact that its separate maintenance will expose them, under that head, to risks and losses against which the Union would afford security. The Chicago manifesto of the Northern party, now supreme, adopts as its fourth article the maintenance inviolate of the rights of the states, and especially the right of each state to order and control its own domestic institutions, while the small party of thorough-going abolitionists, without political impotence, though now hot with the Unionists, has been accustomed to

claim "justice for the slave at any price," and to deprecate what its leaders sometimes called "the blood-stained Union." "This Union," said William Lloyd Garrison, one of their chief authorities, "this Union is a lie; the American Union is a sham, an imposture, a covenant with death, an agreement with hell." Mr. Lincoln, on the other hand, said most distinctly, in his inaugural address: "I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the states where it exists; I believe I have no lawful right to do so, and I have no inclination to do so." He expressed in the same speech his willingness that the Fugitive Slave Law, as a provision of the constitution, "should be made express and irrevocable."

An addition was therefore actually made to the constitution on the third of last March to the effect "that no amendment shall be made to the constitution which will authorise or give congress power to abolish or interfere within any state with the domestic institutions thereof, including that of persons held to labour or servitude by the laws of the said state." Slavery was thus on the eve of the present struggle, by the sole will and consent of the North, made irrevocable in the Union. Of whom, then, are we to believe, and with what shadow of truth can it be represented to us, that the fight of the North is against slavery, or that the secession of the South is for its preservation? Nobody doubts that the party use made of the slave question has embittered feeling between South and North. But the main party use of it has been for the raising of political capital on behalf of other interests than those of the slave. Even the separation of the South from these sources of irritation must be reckoned, with every more material consequence of its establishment as a separate republic, among the changes that all tend to clear away some of the difficulties in the way of a sound reconsideration of the slave system. The division of the Union into two adjacent republics, one slave-holding, the other free, would, in fact, bring us very many years nearer to the end of slavery than a continuance of the old system under a great Union pledged to support as a whole the evil that afflicts a half.

The Federalist cry of anti-slavery as a *casus belli* is not altogether a true issue. We have here shown what the cause of the disruption is not. We shall show next week what the cause of the disruption is.

Meanwhile, any one who desires to acquire a clear view of these all-important questions should read Mr. Spence's book. The work thoroughly vindicates its title: "The American Union, its effect on National Character and Policy, with an Inquiry into Secession as a Constitutional Right, and the Causes of the Disruption." Mr. Spence has assembled facts and authorities in masterly support of his reasoning, and has grouped them with a temperate and logical clearness that cannot fail to convince. He writes with the discretion of a judge who has all the evidence before him, strong and

honest in his own convictions. His work is published by Mr. Bentley, of New Burlington-street.

HURRAH FOR THE ROAD!

It was once laid down by a very eminent writer, that "man is the least transportable species of luggage." He cannot be tied up in a parcel, taken down to a booking-office, and sent wherever a carrier may choose to take him. Unless he is a Queen's messenger, a commercial traveller, a rural postman, or some such wandering officer, he picks his road, and if there is no road to pick, he stays at home. With every disposition to travel and see the world, he will only move from his fireside or his garden on certain conditions. In one age he demands a pack-horse, going at the rate of two miles an hour; in another he asks for a "flying-coach;" and in another he ventures his limbs in a four-horse mail. Travelling is an art, like ground and lofty tumbling, which can only be learnt by degrees. It is a question of confidence. From the handspring you go to the flip-flap, and from the flip-flap to the summersault. The traveller who once had his doubts about stage-coaches, leaps from them on to the luggage train, and from the luggage-train to the wild express. Like the traditional beggar on horseback, he is often a noisy upstart. He will hardly allow the poor iron-horse five minutes to take in water, and grumbles at the slow speed of fifty miles an hour.

As we look back a few years into the past, we are surprised to find how the world seems to have shrunk up. We walk distances, three or four times a day now, which our grandfathers used to regard as a long coach journey. We never rise early to catch a Paddington coach in these days, or are troubled about the hours at which the Bank stages start from Chelsea. We have come to regard Brighton as a place lying at our doors, and Margate as a sea-side village flourishing round the corner. Birmingham, Bristol, Dover, Southampton, and Norwich, all seem to have drawn nearer to town, and to have sunk into the character of London suburbs.

The genii who have brought about these changes in the relations of places are the hard-working road-makers. They have bridged over time and space, have trebled the life of man, when measured by what it can do, and have turned withered villages into thriving cities. They have given us channels as good as money, weights and measures, or any other contrivance for facilitating commerce. They have doubled the size of the poor man's loaf, and of the poor man's fire, and have clothed thousands who, but for them, would have gone naked. Every piece of sound, open, free road is a good Samaritan, that will not let the weary traveller perish by the wayside.

We have all heard a good deal about Roman roads, and some of us have felt the benefit arising from these ancient legacies; but many generations came and went before the great

thoroughfare-makers were copied by our countrymen. The art of road-making in England is not much more than a century old, and this gives us many centuries of rough "bridle-paths" in the dark ages. If any devout believer in the good old times would wish to taste the pleasure of travelling like his forefathers, let him look about for what is called an "undedicated road" in the neighbourhood of London. He will find plenty in those outskirts where brick-fields and market-gardens are ceasing to make bricks and grow cabbages, and are turning their attention to the cultivation of detached villas. An undedicated road means a passage still retained by the owner of the land, and not handed over to the parish authorities as a public thoroughfare. It is undedicated to the local board of works, and defies the monthly reports of the district surveyor, but it is dedicated to all kinds of slush and rubbish. It is generally known as the "back-road" amongst neighbouring schools and families, and is the terror of all right-minded persons who have the care of young children. It is the place where Tommy loses one of his boots in the sucking clay, and hops home for nearly a mile in a fit of nervous excitement. It is the place where Dicky gets a black eye or a cracked head, because he will play at see-saw across an old bar-gate put at the end of the road to mark its private character. It is the place where Sarah Jane breaks the perambulator while pushing it over the uncovered hole of a new coal-cellar; where Master Edward spoils two suits of clothes in three weeks, to the great joy of the local tailor; and where costermongers play undisturbed chuck-farthing on a Sunday morning. The road is a row of soft muddy ridges, formed of brickdust and wet clay, looking like a potato-field; and here and there is a pool of thick fluid the colour of jalap. Some of the children, wishing to make a way into the depths of this wilderness, have planted brickbats in the slush, at easy distances from each other, like the stepping-stones of brooks, and on these they hop in defiance of the mud-billows on either side. Sometimes a foolish traveller, allured by the promise of a short cut, is tempted to try these stepping-stones in the undedicated road, but he generally sticks fast in the centre of the swamp, afraid to go on and hardly knowing how to turn back. Occasionally, during one or two of the dry winter and summer months, the undedicated road may be explored with safety, but for four-fifths of the year it is an impassable bog announced "to be let on building leases."

On some such roads as these, in the good old times, the English traveller made his weary pilgrimage. He trusted to nature, and soon became aware that nature only provides the raw material of roadways. The "merry greenwood," about which so many fancy romances have been written, must have been often as moist and untidy as a scavenger's yard, while outside the magic limits of the brave old oaks, the pathways must have been moats in the rainy season.

The first act of parliament in which a regular

provision is made for the formation and repair of roads in England, is the statute known as the twenty-eighth of Philip and Mary (about 1555). The preamble to this statute describes the roads as "tedious and noisome to travel on," and dangerous to passengers and carriages. Under its powers two surveyors of highways were to be chosen annually in every parish, and the inhabitants of all parishes were obliged, according to their respective ability, to provide labourers, carriages, tools, &c., for four days each year, to work upon the roads under the direction of the surveyors. Rude as this system was, it was considered very perfect even up to the reign of Charles the Second, when, owing to the increase of carriages, particularly about London, it became necessary to adopt a more effective plan, and the toll system, therefore, made its first appearance. This system, however, was not placed upon anything like a solid footing, any more than the roads were, until about 1767, when it was extended to the great roads in all parts of the country, while the contributions of labour, under the old act, were confined to the cross or country roads.

London was no better than the country in these days, although "good and true scavengers" were chosen annually in many of the parishes, and it may date all its improvements under foot to the Westminster Paving Act of 1762. The streets, at this time, were often ditches, obstructed with stalls, sheds, sign-posts, and various other projections. Each inhabitant paved the space in front of his own door, according to his fancy, or his means, and the result generally was to give the passengers a foot way of egg-shaped stones, such as we may now find in the outskirts of Birmingham, Leicester, or Nottingham. Those only who have walked a few miles on these half-buried globes in not over-thick boots, can realise the agony suffered by our unfortunate forefathers. Kerb-stones were unknown in London a century ago, and the carriage-way was undivided from the footway, except in a few of the principal streets, where chained posts or wooden railings were fixed at the side, as they are still fixed in some of the old suburbs. A constant struggle was made by the passengers to get the wall, as it was called, and so avoid a little of the slush thrown up from the gutter in the centre. The etiquette of the wall was even laid down in books, and fixed in that saying which gives that side to the weakest. "In the last age," said Dr. Johnson, "when my mother lived in London, there were two sets of people, those who gave the wall, and those who took it—the peaceable and the quarrelsome. Now, it is fixed that every man keeps to the right, or, if one is taking the wall, another yields it, and it is never a dispute." Since that time the rule has been changed, at least for drivers, as we may learn pleasantly from the following epigram:

The rule of the road is a paradox quite,

In driving your carriage along;

If you go to the left you are sure to go right,

If you go to the right you go wrong.

The plan for extending turnpike-roads from London to distant parts of the country met with the most violent protective opposition. A certain Blandford waggoner, handed down in the pages of anecdote, gave expression to the popular opinion. "Roads," he said, "on'y be good for wun thing—for waggon-drivin'. I on'y wunt vour-foot width in a leane, an' arl the rest may goo to the devil. The gentry ought to steay at whoam, rot 'em, an' not run gossippin' oop and deown the country."

This intelligent native knew exactly what he was talking about, and was not out of tune with his age. The counties in the neighbourhood of London petitioned parliament against the extension of turnpike-roads, on the ground that the remoter counties would be able, from the comparative cheapness of labour in them, to sell their produce in London at a much lower rate than they could do. They complained that their rents would be reduced, and cultivation ruined by the new system. The new system, however, like many other reforms, was carried out in spite of this narrow-minded opposition, and the croakers woke up, in a few years afterwards, to find themselves richer than ever.

The improvement of roads, when once begun, proceeded rapidly enough, because good roads helped, more than anything, to increase our capital and population. It is a mistake to suppose that our forefathers were more benighted than we are, or that we have no men, like the Blandford waggoner, thriving amongst us. Man-kind, we may feel pretty sure, always liked good roads, good lights, good police, and all the adjuncts of our well-advertised civilisation; but they could only get these things by the force of numbers. Roads, lights, and constables have to be paid for by something like a poll-tax, and the fewer the polls, the heavier the burden for each individual.

Even now we could double our police without feeling too secure in our "castles," but we are held back from indulging in this luxury by considering the rates. We often grumble that a policeman can never be found when he is wanted, by which we mean that these officers are not as numerous as lamp-posts, but we forget that the remedy is in our own hands, and that we can have any number of constables if we choose to pay for them.

It is almost impossible to take up any book which deals with the last century, without coming upon whole chapters describing the miseries of travelling. People who had any state appearance to keep up were the most unlucky of all, for walking on the side-path was better than riding on the rough flinty roads, and riding on horseback was better than travelling in a carriage. Dukes, lords, ambassadors, and persons of dignity, were in a position like that in which the Irishman found himself when the bottom of his sedan-chair came out, which made him think that he might as well walk, if it were not for the look of the thing. Goods of all kinds in Scotland were conveyed on horseback for speed and cheapness; even oatmeal, coals, turf, straw,

and hay, being carried in this way for short distances. A set of people known by the name of *cadgers*, who have given a word to our slang dictionaries, plied regularly between different places, selling salt, fish, poultry, eggs, and earthenware. These things were carried on pack-horses, in sacks or baskets suspended on each side of the animal. In carrying goods between distant places it was necessary to employ a cart, as all that a horse could carry on his back was not sufficient to pay for a long journey. These carriers, if we include delays, often went at the rate of a quarter of a mile an hour! Mr. J. R. McCulloch records it as a fact that the common carrier from Selkirk to Edinburgh, *thirty-eight* miles distant, required a *fortnight* for his journey between the two places, going and returning! The road, it must be said, was originally one of the most dangerous in the whole country, for a large part of it lay in the bottom of a district called Gala-water, from the name of the chief stream, the channel of the water being, when not flooded, the track chosen as the most level, and the easiest to travel in.

Between the largest cities, says the same authority, the means of travelling were very little better. In 1678, an agreement was made to run a coach between Edinburgh and Glasgow, a distance of forty-four miles, which was to be drawn by *six* horses, and to perform the journey from Glasgow to Edinburgh and back in *six* days. Even a century later it took a day and a half for the stage-coach to travel from Edinburgh to Glasgow.

As late as 1763, there was but one stage-coach from Edinburgh to London, which set out once a month, taking from twelve to fourteen days to perform the journey. In 1830, six or seven coaches set out each day from both ends on the same road, and the time for executing the journey was reduced to about forty-eight hours. Now, it is almost needless to say, that by the Post-office limited mail express train, we may travel the same distance on a comfortable couch in ten hours and a half.

At this time the "franking" of letters was a valuable privilege conceded to members of parliament, and others in authority, and largely used for the accommodation of their friends. The Post-office managers complain very loudly of the strange articles at present sent through the post, but in those days their complaints were much louder. The "franking," which began with letters, gradually extended to small parcels; from small parcels it got to cover large ones, and at last the mail-carriers were very much shocked at seeing a huge feather-bed registered as a free letter. Inquiry, indignation, an improved system of mail-carrying, the extension of population and correspondence, and reduced charges for postage, at last put an end to the franking privilege.

While almost anybody could rob the post through this abused "free-list," the poor mails were just as ill-treated on the road. The most feeble thief of the day could rob a postboy,

and rob him by the most feeble contrivance. The French mail was often stopped on its road to Dover by a piece of string stretched across the entrance of Kent-street, Borough. This caught the horse's legs, caused him to stumble, and throw the postboy off, who returned to the chief office, and coolly reported the loss of his mail-bags. Rural postmen were always ready to be robbed by any stranger who appeared on the road, and it was long before stage-coachmen, fed, as they were, with lying stories about the daring of fancy highwaymen, had courage not to stand and deliver at the first impudent summons. The feather-beds, so liberally franked at the expense of the country, were very often carried off into criminal bondage, and few taxpayers can help rejoicing at this punishment of their enemies.

MR. SAMUEL SMILES, in his recent *Lives of the Engineers*, has collected from various sources a number of amusing details about English roads and road-travelling in the last century. In 1690, Lord Chancellor Cowper politely described Sussex as a "sink of about fourteen miles broad." People in some parts used to travel by swimming; and it was almost as difficult for old people to get to church in Sussex during winter as it was in the Lincoln Fens, where they rowed there in boats. Fuller once saw an old lady being drawn to church in her own coach by the aid of six oxen. The Sussex roads were so bad as to pass into a by-word. A contemporary says that in travelling through a slough of extraordinary miryness, it used to be called "the Sussex bit of the road;" and he satirically adds, that the reason why the Sussex girls were so long-limbed was because of the tenacity of the mud in that county; the practice of pulling the foot out of it by the strength of the ankle tending to stretch the muscle and lengthen the bone.

The roads in the neighbourhood of London were as bad as those in Sussex. Chertsey was a two days' journey from town; and Lord Hervey, writing from Kensington in 1736, says: "The road from this place to London is so infamously bad that we live here in the same solitude as we would do if cast upon a rock in the middle of the ocean; and all the Londoners tell us that there is between them and us an impassable gulf of mud." Royal carriages stuck fast in the mud for hours together, defying all efforts to remove them.

It was only a few of the main roads out of London that were in any way practicable for coaches. On the occasion of any state visits, labourers went before the royal train to mend the ways. Judges were thrown into bog-holes while going on circuit, and kept the juries waiting while they were being dug out. Sometimes they fell into sloughs, and had to be hauled out by plough-horses.

It was said, in 1752, that a Londoner would no more think of travelling into the west of England for pleasure, than of going to Nubia. "Of all the cursed roads," says Arthur Young in 1769, "that ever disgraced this kingdom in

the very ages of barbarism, none ever equalled that from Billericay to Tilbury. It is for near twelve miles so narrow that a mouse cannot pass by any carriage. I saw a fellow creep under his waggon to assist me to lift, if possible, my chaise over a hedge. To add to all the infamous circumstances which occur to plague a traveller, I must not forget the eternally meeting with chalk waggons, themselves frequently stuck fast, till a collection of them are in the same situation, and twenty or thirty horses may be tacked to each to draw them out, one by one." In Essex, generally, he found the roads full of ruts "of an incredible depth;" he found the turnpike-road between Bury and Sudbury, in Suffolk, as bad "as any unmetalled lane in Wales;" full of ponds of liquid dirt, and horse-laming flints. Between Tittsworth and Oxford he found the turnpike-road, as it was called, abounding in loose stones, as large as a man's head, and full of holes, and deep ruts; from Gloucester to Newnham, a distance of twelve miles, he found another "cursed road," "infamously stony, with ruts all the way;" and from Newnham to Chepstow he describes the road as a series of hills, like "the roofs of houses joined."

Going to the north, a short time afterwards, this unfortunate but observant traveller found the roads no better in that quarter. Between Richmond and Darlington they were "like to dislocate his bones;" and when he has to speak of the roads in Lancashire, he foams with rage. He cautions us to avoid them as we would the Evil One, for he measured ruts in them four feet deep, that were full of floating mud.

The roads in the Midland Counties, and in Kent, were no better. When Mr. Rennie, the engineer, was engaged in surveying the Weald with a view to the cutting of a canal through it in 1802, he found the country almost destitute of practicable roads.

In Northamptonshire, the only way of getting along some of the main roads in rainy weather was by swimming. Even now it is no uncommon thing, as I can testify by personal observation, to find miles of the railway from Blisworth to Peterborough under water during the wet season. All over the country inland light-houses — land beacons — were humANELY stationed to keep benighted travellers out of quagmires, ponds, and bogs. In Staffordshire, before the great network of canals was made, the roads were so bad, and so much like roads in every other part of the kingdom, that the carriage of earthenware in panniers was one shilling per ton per mile, or eight shillings for a journey of ten miles. This, too, was in the days of the great artist-manufacturer—Wedgwood.

Modes of travelling changed with the gradual improvement of the roads. The foot passengers occasionally took to horse, while ladies rode on pillions, or in horse-litters. Pack-horses gave way to carriers' carts and waggons, and the latter heavy rumbling vehicles, which did more to wear out good roads than any monsters ever framed by coach-builders, were largely sup-

planted by stage-coaches about 1650. The waggons crawled along, perhaps, at the rate of ten miles in twelve hours, but the stage-coaches, with much jolting, were able to reach four miles an hour. The waggons were solid, slow, and safe, while the coaches were high and unsafe, and their drivers were drunken bullies. No change in the mode of travelling was carried out without a noisy agitation against it. Class interests were as clamorous then as they are now, and as desirous that their particular business should be regarded as beyond improvement.

The condition of the road to York in the last century is never considered in the popular account of Dick Turpin's half-legendary ride. He is represented mounted on a fiery blood mare, leaping over carts and toll-bars, and flying along a hard, smooth ground granite road, like a jockey at Epsom. This is the fancy picture, and it is almost a pity to disturb it. The York road in most places was like those which made Arthur Young so savage; and bold Turpin's pace *may* have been a broken amble of four miles an hour.

In 1754 the first "flying coach" was established by a knot of Manchester men to run between that town and London. Their notion of "flying" was to do the journey in four days and a half, and yet this moderate speed was looked upon with distrust. Lord Campbell tells us that he was warned not to travel by Palmer's improved mail-coaches, the first vehicles that ventured upon eight miles an hour, towards the close of the last century. He was told of certain passengers who had come through by these coaches from Edinburgh to London, and had died of apoplexy from the rapidity of the motion. This eight miles an hour was afterwards increased to ten or twelve, with the improvement in the leading lines of road; and at the latter point the rate of fast travelling stopped, until the best road of all was made—the railroad.

The railway reports, just issued by the Board of Trade, give us a full statistical account of what our railroads now are. The miles opened in 1860 for regular traffic in the United Kingdom were nearly ten thousand five hundred. The travellers during the same year, also in the United Kingdom, were one hundred and sixty-three millions and a half, besides nearly fifty thousand holders of season tickets, who probably made many journeys. Altogether there must have been nearly six journeys in the year for each member of our population. The trains of all kinds travelled more than one hundred and two millions of miles, or more than four thousand times round the world. Three hundred and fifty-seven thousand and more dogs, and over a quarter of a million of horses, made railway journeys during the same period. The goods traffic represented the carriage of over twelve millions of cattle, sheep, and pigs, and nearly ninety millions of tons of minerals and general merchandise. The receipts of our railways, from all kinds of traffic, were nearly twenty-eight millions sterling (equal to the

interest on our national debt), a little less than one-half of which came from passengers and the mails, and the rest, or largest half, from goods. The expenditure of the companies was about forty-seven per cent of the gross receipts, leaving fourteen millions and a half sterling as the net receipts. The compensation paid for accidents and losses amounted to a little over one hundred and eighty-one thousand pounds. The rolling stock comprised five thousand eight hundred locomotives, over fifteen thousand passenger engines, and nearly one hundred and eighty-one thousand waggons for goods. Comparing 1860 with 1859, the passengers (or journeys) were increased nearly fourteen millions, the minerals nearly nine millions of tons, the receipts more than two millions sterling, and the miles travelled nearly nine millions. The trains run in the course of last year were upwards of ten thousand a day.

The inland roads of Great Britain, however, can never lose their importance as great feeding arteries of towns, even under any possible extension of railways. They have been chiefly made what they are by the greatest engineers, and some of the works of Rennie and Telford of this kind need not hide their heads by the side of the famous Alpine Simplon. Leaving the railway behind us, at any point, we may find much to be proud of amongst our monuments of road-making on the hills and in the valleys of our country. What we have got, however, should not blind us to what we have not got, and while six bridges, practically closed by a toll, are spanning the river Thames between Chelsea and Southwark, we ought not to consider our road-making thoroughly finished.

THE BLACK MILL.

IN the highlands of Bavaria, shut out from the rest of the world by rocky crags and inaccessible hills, lies the dark and gloomy valley of the Sitte, a valley which, in olden times, was held to be haunted by evil spirits, and doomed to all forms of sinful sorrow, but which, to modern understanding, would only betoken disease and madness, and the crimes springing naturally from poverty, ignorance, and isolation. The inhabitants were, for the most part, of the very lowest class; for, save the priest and magistrate, not an educated man of good social condition lived in the shadow of those gloomy hills to give his better thoughts and a brighter example to the poorer and less instructed. Consequently, the people were rough and ignorant, sunk in superstition, narrow-minded and bigoted, holding to all the prejudices of a worn-out time, and making their very religion but the cause of strife and delusion. They had abandoned the more innocent and picturesque deceptions of the ancient church to adopt in their stead the wildest canons of the "devil-creed," and they mixed up the idea of sorcery and magic and witchcraft with everything unaccustomed in man or ungenial in nature. There were not half a dozen people in this lonely

Bavarian valley who did not believe in man's direct dealings with the devil.

Excepting the two officials already spoken of, the chief man of the district was Frederic of the Black Mill, commonly called the Black Miller of Sittenthal. He was a man of some understanding and considerable property, but of the worst possible reputation. A bad son, a bad husband, and a bad father, unsocial as a neighbour, hard and tyrannical as a master, he had not fulfilled one of the relations of life with credit or esteem. Cruel to his dependents and insolent to his superiors, a man so fierce and arbitrary that none but the stoutest-hearted dare oppose him, he found himself master in a world of slaves—a master who had never known ruth or justice. His father, the old miller, had long lived in daily dread of some murderous violence from him; and even yet were to be seen the blood-stains on the oaken floor, and the deep dents on the wall, where once the Black Miller had struck the old man with an axe, and very nearly sent him to the world beyond the grave ere his time was come. And still remained on the massive doors the heavy bolts and bars, and locks and chains, by which the father had sought to protect himself against his son's madness and revenge. Indeed, there were not wanting witnesses to swear that when he lay sick and failing, his son had dragged him from his bed, and flung him down the stone steps in front of the mill; saying that he had lived long enough, and what room was there in the world for such a worn-out old wretch as he? So that when he died, a few days later, the ghastly shadow of parricide and murder had fitted through the house, but none were bold enough to seize that shadow, and give it the bodily form of accusation and evidence. The stern savage went on employing all his energies and invention in torturing the victims dependent on him.

The "house-mother," Barbara, a gentle, timid, weak-minded woman, patient and saintly enough, but without even a slave's faculty of self-assertion or defence, was his chief victim; and he did not spare her. He never spoke to her save by the most insulting names and epithets; he beat her daily, with or without provocation, and ever without intentional offence; and not only beat her, as any ill-tempered man might have beaten an unloved wife, but carried his violence to the very limits of murder. Indeed, he would have murdered her, and that more than once, had she not been defended by her sons, whose love for their poor down-trodden, broken-spirited mother was the most pathetic thing in all this mournful tragedy. Once he struck her so brutally on her head that she was rendered unconscious for many weeks, and indeed never quite recovered the use of her small brain; and once he broke her arm with a blow from the back of an axe; besides cutting and wounding her with knives, hatchets, sharp-pointed stones, or anything else dangerous and handy. And not content with this more active manner of ill usage, the Black Miller went into other and even more humiliating details.

He would absent himself for weeks, taking all the money with him, and locking up the family stores, so that the wife and children were nearly famished to death during his stay; a contingency that gave increased zest to his pleasures; and then he would come back empty-handed, miser as he was having spent all his money, frequently amounting to important sums, on the most abandoned women of the neighbouring towns; by some of whom—notably one woman named Hopfgärtner—he had large families publicly acknowledged and sumptuously supported. To the twelve children borne him by poor Barbara he had never been friend or father. Of those twelve only five now remained alive, and more than one person said that the Black Miller had murdered the others; while some said shudderingly, having devoted himself to the Devil, he had killed them according to the terms of his bond, and to save his own soul for yet a few years longer. He made his sons his day-labourers, but gave them only blows and curses for their wages; his daughters were his house servants—house servants in rags, shoeless and half-starved, beaten and ill-treated like their mother; to none of them was he even human, but more like a fierce wild beast.

The family consisted of two girls and two boys, the eldest of whom, Conrad, was eight-and-twenty, the youngest, Kunigunde, eighteen; a stable-lad of thirteen, who lived in the mill, but at a remote part of the house where he could hear very little; and Wagner, a day-labourer, who, with his wife, inhabited a small cottage, or lean-to, by the side. It was a lonely God-forgotten place altogether, that old Black Mill of Sittenthal; far removed from any other habitation, and still farther isolated by the evil reputation which it had gained both in the past and present. For common report said that it was haunted by ghosts and evil spirits, and still the belated traveller, passing near, might hear shrieks and groans and cries and the sobs of frightened women, and the shrill screams of young children borne on the dead night air in a very tumult of crime and despair commingled. Therefore, though the wife was known to be a good and pious woman, and the sons fine, industrious, honest lads, who remained in their present torture only because of their mother and that they might stand between her and their father's violence, yet the prejudices of the neighbours were too strong to be overcome, and weeks would pass without a soul of honest fame daring to venture within the shadow of that gloomy and accursed place.

On the 9th of August, 1817, the Black Miller suddenly disappeared. No one knew what had become of him, or whether he had gone; but his life was so evil and his habits so lawless that no one was astonished at anything he might do: and what if the devil, his father, had carried him off bodily at last? It was what the world of Sittenthal looked for, and it seemed as if they were not to be disappointed. The mill family kept quite quiet for some time, but on the 11th of October poor half-witted Barbara

went to lodge her statement with the magistrate, two months after her husband's disappearance. She said how the miller had gone, taking with him all his ready money and bank bills, leaving them nothing to eat, and no money to buy food; leaving them, in fact, in such a position that without some assistance they must have starved, for they were unable to touch his rents, or sell his stores without legal authorisation. The magistrate heard the mill-wife's story, rubbed his chin, looked at her hard, and thought; then decided to give her letters of administration, and power to act until such time as the Black Miller chose to reappear. Barbara paid the gentleman heavily, and smiled as she returned to her home. Then she and her sons entered into the peaceful occupation of the Black Mill, its lands, and revenues, waiting for the time until the miller would return.

For more than a year they led the most contented and undisturbed life possible. From a very sink of enmity, strife, and discord, the old doomed house became a comparative heaven of ease, silence, and love. As Barbara and the sons had always been respected, the people were not sorry to be able to show them many kindly attentions, and thus to prove to them that their former repugnance had been to the father only, and in nowise connected with themselves. This one brief year was the most prosperous and contented, outwardly, that the family at the Black Mill had ever known.

It was the general opinion that the miller had been carried off bodily by the devil; indeed, many of the villagers swore that they had seen his tortured ghost, and heard his awful cries, as his former flatterer and friend had now become his unsparing torturer and master; but there were others, a few of trifle less besotted cast, who looked graver than even this belief would have made them, and who spoke on the subject below their breath, and mysteriously. Soon a low heavy murmur went round; a terrified whisper, that grew and gathered as it grew; a horrible suspicion; an awful word; for pale lips muttered MURDER—the murder of a father and a husband, wife and children all consenting. But all agreed that Wagner and his witch-wife knew more of the business than any one else, and that the inquiry and suspicion would begin with them.

This Wagner, who lived in the little cottage or house beside the mill, was a discharged soldier; a man of bad parentage and worse life. His wife was no better than himself, and had, moreover, the reputation of being a dangerous witch, whose very look could blight, and whose spoken charm or curse could kill; a woman so foul in person and so tainted in name, that not even the most disreputable would associate with her. But they were both much patronised at the Black Mill; almost fearfully so; for what but fear, and the possession of some dread power, could induce such women as Barbara and her daughters to hold constant friendly intercourse with anything so vile as Anna Wagner? and what but the knowledge of some awful

secret could give that desperate villain her husband, the discharged soldier, such influence over Conrad and young Frederic? Besides, Wagner had been heard to say, jeeringly, that if he told all he knew, the old place would crack asunder for very horror; and that, as for the mill family, they were indeed bound to be kind to him, and liberal, for if they held back, he could make them give him what money he would, and they might think themselves let off easily for any mere money payment he chose to demand. All these rumours and hints coming finally, and last of all, to the ears of the magistrate—he who had granted the letters of administration—a search was decided on, and the police entered the mill. But Barbara and the sons knew the weakness of the official. A blind of gold soon darkened his eyes, and neither he nor his gendarmes could discover a trace of foul play on which suspicion might rest. Yet the word once spoken never wholly died away; the suspicion, once awakened, never slept again; and though the family returned to their old peaceful way of life, and for three years longer forgot their former griefs; yet the cloud was always over them, and who knew when it might burst forth into tempest and despair?

In 1821, the magistrate of the Sittenthal district fell under the displeasure of his superiors. A commission was sent down to examine and report on his conduct; during which time he was suspended, and access to the registration office denied him. While the commission was going on, a fire suddenly broke out in the registration-office, where all the deeds and papers were kept; and before it could be extinguished the chief part of the records were destroyed. Thus, a crowd of witnesses was got rid of, which would have been as awkward as undeniable. But among the papers saved was one headed "Touching the appointment of a curator for the absent Black Miller," by which it appeared evident that more lay behind than had ever been made manifest to the public. The new commissioner was curious and energetic. He soon learnt the story of the Black Miller, and all the gossip connected with his strange and sudden disappearance; he learnt, too, that the magistrate had caused the mill to be searched in the most careless and unsatisfactory manner; that his "report" had been laughed at by every one in the place, and believed by all to have been bought by a bribe. In a word, the commissioner was set full and fair on the track, and it would be his own fault if he did not follow up the scent. He resolved at once on his course of action, and the grass did not grow under his feet before he translated that resolve into deeds. That very evening, in the mournful hours of the early darkness, while Barbara and her children were standing by the table saying grace before supper, he suddenly surrounded the mill with a band of soldiers; and, before the inmates had time to speak among themselves or arrange the order of their answers, placed every one of them under separate arrest.

And first were examined Barbara and her

two sons; but without effect. They answered just as they had answered three years ago; and the commissioner thought he was going to have his labour for nothing, and he made a fool of into the bargain. But the next day Wagner was taken in hand, and proved himself the friend of justice and the new commissioner. It was not long before he smoothed away all difficulties, and knotted the halter for his own neck quite resignedly. Silently he led the soldiers over a waste bit of ground that lay near the mill; up to a steep ravine, where nothing but lizards and loathsome reptiles crept among the stones, and the hoarse black raven screamed over the deep rift.

"Here," said Wagner, "may the corpse of the Black Miller be found, for here the sons flung him after they had murdered him, piling upon him weeds and moss and heavy stones; yes, here is the Black Miller sure enough!"

The soldiers rushed down the ravine, and began to dig, Wagner directing. At last, after having removed many large and heavy boulders, they came to a heap of dead leaves and smaller stones; when the man cried out, "Now for the body!" and the next instant their picks struck upon a mass of mouldering cloth and linen—with the skeleton of a human being enclosed.

"Yes," cried Wagner, as they brought up the heap, "yes, that is the Black Miller! Four years ago, the sons, in my presence, carried him here and flung him into the hole, and then we covered him up with stones and moss. And look at his beautiful teeth! The Black Miller had grand teeth, just like the skeleton here!" As many of the bystanders remembered.

When the wife and children were brought to the place—as they were, suddenly, and without preparation—a most noticeable effect was produced on each, but different with each. "Yes," said the eldest son, Conrad, and without being questioned, "that is my father, but I am not the doer." Frederic, the second son, looked silently at the bones. When asked what they were, he answered, doggedly, "What should they be? They are bones; but whether they are the bones of a man or beast I do not know. I do not understand either men's bones nor beasts'." Kunigunde, the youngest daughter, cried out on the way, "I know nothing of it. I know certainly that that thing is my father, but of how he came yonder I know nothing. I am guiltless, quite guiltless." Margaret, the second daughter, also said, "Indeed I am innocent. I knew nothing of the matter until my father began to scream fearfully. It was too late then. I have not had a happy hour since. Oh God! what will become of us!"

All these passionate protestations were evidence enough. The new commissioner was not to be bought off like the friendly old magistrate: blood must be redeemed by blood, and the offended majesty of justice vindicated. The wife, her four children, and Wagner, the day-labourer, were all indicted for the murder of Frederic, the Black Miller, and matters looked

very doubtful for the entire group. Then the truth came out.

Things, always bad, had become unbearable at the Black Mill. The violence and cruelty of the Black Miller seemed as if they had reached their height; and when he threatened, as he did, to murder them all, one by one, the bravest or the most hopeful could not believe that threat a mere empty sound, meaning nothing. Then the degrading irregularities by which poor Barbara had been so long humiliated were now flaunted openly before her eyes, and the last remnant of home, honour, and respect, destroyed; for preparations were being made, without disguise, for turning wife and family out of the mill, to instal in their stead the woman Hopfgärtner and her unlawful children. In short, what with cruelty, vice, and meanness carried to the very verge of starvation, it had become a hand-to-hand struggle for life or death between the family and the father.

The day-labourer Wagner bore as little good will to the Black Miller as any other; and such service as he proposed to himself to offer the family, would bind the young sons to him for ever, unlock the family coffers, and make him master and independent for life. They were a poor, frightened, broken-necked race, only fitted to be the prey of a bolder spirit like himself. The sons fell into the snare, and at last were won over to consent—not to a murder, but to a blow in self-defence, for the protection of their beloved mother. But at first only by the milder means of sorcery and magic. The witch-wife Anna undertook this part of the business, and hung up a pair of the father's stockings in the chimney; by which, according to the laws of witchcraft, his life would have wasted away as the stockings shrivelled and consumed. But finding that these charms and conjurations had no effect, the matter was trusted to the man's surer hand. Steel might do what sorcery was incapable of, and Wagner must murder the old man before the old man had time to murder them. When they had consented to this, Wagner prepared for his part with as much indifference as if he had been bidden to slaughter a sheep or an ox, earning his hundred guildens for the job quite as tranquilly as by any other manner of labour possible to him. In the still and heavy darkness of that terrible August night—the whole family aware of what was taking place by the door of the miller's sleeping room—Wagner struck down their old tyrant in the midst of his sins, the sons aiding actively, the mother more passively, with her prayers. Then they carried the corpse to the saw-mill, where they buried it; but a year or so afterwards they dug it up again—after the mill had been "searched" by the friendly magistrate—and flung it down that rocky rift where the soldiers of the new commissioners found it.

Now that the thing was discovered and known, all evasion was at an end. Wagner confessed to every particular, with the same brutal indifference as had characterised him all along; and the wife and sons excused themselves as well as they could, on the plea of necessity and self-

defence, for it was either his life or theirs. But justice has little inclination for psychology in any of its forms, and rarely enters into causes when it can deal with results. It took somewhat into consideration though the bad character of the man, and the tremendous provocation which the family had received, and assigned a lighter sentence than would otherwise have been awarded to parricide and assassination. Conrad and Wagner, as chief actors, were condemned to civil death, with solitary confinement for life, heavily chained and fettered, the "bullet" super-added; Frederic, as an accomplice of the first grade, to fifteen years' imprisonment; Barbara, as an accomplice of the second grade, to eight years' imprisonment; Anna Wagner to one year's confinement in the House of Correction; but Margaret and Kunigunde, the two daughters, were declared innocent, and left to their own misery and desolation.

The history of this crime is recorded in Hitzig's New Pitaval, and has served as occasion for much German philosophy and reasoning. Moralists and divines have been sadly puzzled where to draw the line between self-defence that is lawful, and self-defence that is criminal: whether a known aggression, planned and to come, may be evaded by the same action as would be recognised and allowed if the strife had really begun. It has also been made a question of the difference lying between public and private tyranny; and whether, what has been admired when directed against a public tyrant, may at any time be admitted when turned against a domestic despot.

THE IRON AGE OF AGRICULTURE.*

WHEN the last bull has been handled, the last pony trotted out, the last aldermanic pig compelled to cease snoring, stand up, and show himself—when, in fact, the live-stock department has been examined to the best of the stranger's power—although he may not, perhaps, be able to equal the Australian colonist at Leeds, who thought he had *individualised* every horned animal in the yard—he will probably turn from nature and art in feeding and breeding to pure art in iron, steel, and wood, and proceed to the long streets of sheds filled with productions of the agricultural engineers; first surveying the outlying machinery at rest or in motion—steam engines and barn machinery, and strange, new, ponderous objects which, too lofty to go under cover, form an outer girdle along a considerable segment of the enclosing fence. This is the iron age of agriculture, and these are the results and the aids of what the French call the intensive system of cultivation; these are the produce of railroads, chemical manures, deep drainage, steam-driven factories; of an unlimited demand for meat and bread; and of free trade—for the late Protectionist farmer draws his stores of seed and cattle-food from every quarter of the

* See Agricultural Encampments in No. 136, and Show Cattle in No. 138.

world, and cannot move a step without his new friend, the agricultural engineer.

It is very difficult to give an idea, even to a visitor full of what he has seen at the Baker-street Show, of the effect of the streets between sheds filled with goods chiefly for the use of farmers and partly for the sight-seeing public who crowd these agricultural thoroughfares. There are the tools and machines for breaking up and stirring the ground, from the simple spade or steel fork to the plough and many-tined cultivator, from the horse-plough at five pounds to the steam-cultivator at from two hundred to seven hundred pounds; there are the machines for sowing seed, from the hand-dibble to the drill, in all its varieties, dry and with water, with chemical manure and without, in lines and broadcast, for the flat and the ridge, for plains and for steep hills; there are horse-hoes as well as hand-hoes, and every contrivance for extirpating weeds and ridging up earth round roots; there are sickles and scythes of new and old patterns, and a dozen different kinds of corn-reaping and grass-mowing machines; there are an endless variety of contrivances moved by hand, by horse-power, by steam, for thrashing out, collecting, cleaning, and sorting every kind of seed crop.

Then follow the endless contrivances for feeding cattle and manufacturing meat: our modern demands for meat cannot be satisfied by mere grass and hay, or roots, or corn, or lentils in their natural state—they are sliced, pulped, and steamed in half a dozen different ways. Great is the noise of chaff-cutters, for horse, hand, and steam-power; working continually with a whizzing noise which would be unbearable in a more confined space. Other machines split beans, crush oats, grind corn, and in every possible manner profess to save the time, the teeth, and digestion of meat-making animals. At the same time, steam-engines, portable or fixed, painted in the gayest colours, send their driving wheels round, setting in motion elaborate machinery which works here only at straw but which is ready to take in sheaves of corn at one end and deliver it as grain in sacks, cleaned, weighed, and ready for market at the other. Carts and waggons, sufficient to supply a small army, are ranged side by side, with rollers of every form capable of reducing the most stubborn clods to dust, and of, for a time, solidifying the loosest soil; and then mixed up amongst these serious and costly utilities are scattered a thousand amusing and useful miscellanies, and not a few "notions," like Peter Pindar's "razors, made to sell," garden-chairs and iron network, sausage and washing machines, and at Leeds some machines "contrived a double debt to pay"—one day to make butter and the next to wash the butterman's shirt! and a thousand small knick-knacks to tempt the wives, the daughters, and the great folks who, with more zeal than knowledge, patronise the great show. From pony-carriages to nutmeg-graters, from side-saddles to bread-making machines, new

grates, new gates, and machine-driven pestles and mortars for kitchen use.

Thirty years ago, before railroads opened up cheap conveyance, and trained skilled mechanics had developed the tools for making machinery, with rare exceptions the agricultural implements were made either on the farm or at the nearest blacksmith's shop. If the ploughshare was purchased, the wheelwright and the joiner did the work the jack-of-all-trades, shepherd or carter, could not do in the winter's evening. We are now passing through the iron age to which we arrived by the sheep-feeding age, and we are rapidly arriving at the steam age of agriculture. Dry as figures are generally considered, on this they are eloquent. At Cambridge, in 1840, there were thirty-six implements exhibited. Howard showed wooden ploughs, both wheel and swing. At the present, if you pass between the river and the railway, you see Howard's factory at Bedford—a magnificent quadrangle, dedicated to the manufacture of iron ploughs, harrows, and steam cultivators. Hundreds of mechanics are employed there, acres are covered with ploughs and harrows ready for despatch to every district of England, the colonies, and the chief agricultural countries of Europe. Lincoln, Boston, Leiston, Ipswich in truly rural Suffolk, and other towns too numerous to mention, also support factories, created by the demands of the iron age of agriculture. In 1841, at Liverpool, there were three hundred and twelve implements exhibited; the department was considered to have attained an impossible importance in five hundred implements at Derby. But at Leeds there were one hundred and three stands; three hundred and fifty-eight exhibitors, who brought to the ground five thousand five hundred articles to show and sell. At Derby, the catalogue was a thin pamphlet, in large type; at Leeds the catalogue filled four hundred closely-printed pages. But the difference in quality was even more remarkable than in quantity.

At Leeds stern business was the rule; the implements, with rare exceptions, had been tried and approved, and were to be had in any number, and at certain prices. At Derby, in the golden age of the Royal Society, new inventions were as plentiful as blackberries, and amateurs occurred on every leaf of the catalogue; in the first five pages the names of a peer, a squire, and an M.P., are found as inventors and exhibitors; at Leeds new implements were very rare, and amateurs rarely soared beyond a garden squirt or similar innocent toy. The chief novelty and greatest triumph was steam cultivation, which there conquered the prejudices of incredulous landlords; farmers had worked the system two years before. The amateurs have had their day, and very useful they were in their day. The success of the annual show now depends on the men who buy to earn a profit out of land from men who make to realise a profit, and on the sight-seers.

It is rather interesting to trace the sprouting of the certain valuable mechanical aids to agricul-

ture at the Royal Society's Shows. At Derby the first idea of universal pipe-drainage was suggested by Read's hand-made pipe. At the same show the doom of wooden-framed harrows was sealed, for the iron zigzag harrow there appeared. The judges reported that they could not decide on the comparative merit of steam-engines, but they were coming into use as a matter of business. Tuxford, of Boston, had made the first years before, but there were no means of sending such a bulky machine to any customer except by horse-teams.

A thrashing-machine, which attempted to do what machines in every village do now, was another curiosity in 1843. The following year, 1844, at Southampton, Crosskill's clod-crusher, which had for years been creeping into notice, took a gold medal and its position as a standard implement, and one of the Society's successes. At Shrewsbury, in 1845, appeared the horizontal tile-making machine, which satisfied all the demands of the founder of deep uniform agricultural drainage. The only machine or implement ever brought out by the Society's prizes. 1846, at Newcastle, was marked by the Society's doing a bit of deep-draining on the town moor, much against the grain of the commoners, and not without a large expenditure of beer by a patriotic Newcastle man. This converted the northern county to deep drainage. The following year, at Northampton, a complete set of steel-edged draining tools were, for the first time, exhibited.

At Norwich, in 1849, a trained mechanic became the company's engineer.

At Exeter, in 1850, was shown the germ of Fowler's steam plough, in an attempt to lay drain pipes of wood by machinery.

In 1851 the Society held no implement show, and the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park brought out, without a prize, the first reaping-machine (from America) that ever attracted serious notice in England; and Mr. Pusey, acting as agricultural commissioner, discovered two implements—Bentall's broadshare and Coleman's cultivator—which had escaped the attention of the Society's judges, although the farmers of England had long previously made them into standard implements. Since 1851 the Royal Agricultural Society have repeatedly tried, reported on, and awarded prizes to reaping-machines. There are three principles, or plans, on which reaping-machines have been made; all have been rewarded twice, and it is impossible to learn from the Society's decisions which is to be preferred. Reaping-machines and dearth of labour led to the importation of grass-mowing-machines, which also, without prizes, were brought out, and have been widely adopted by farmers.

At Lincoln, in 1854, swing-ploughs were signally defeated by wheel-ploughs, but that did not at the time produce much effect on the Lincolnshire prejudices in favour of the county swing-ploughs. Cotgreave's plough, produced at Lincoln, for performing three operations at once—ploughing, lifting, and subsoiling—came too soon. No horse team could work it. The

inventor was fortunate enough to be able to wait for steam.*

In 1856, at Chelmsford, a great change took place in the arrangements of the implement department. The vast increase in the number of articles sent induced the council to consent to divide the competition into three classes, one to be tried every third year. Even this was found too much for the judges, and the prize list is now spread over four years. Exhibitors at Chelmsford were also allowed to put the machinery in motion, and a very dull department from that year became alive and interesting to the unmechanical spectators. At an adjourned trial of the steam cultivator, in 1856, experienced farmers became convinced that it had left theory and reached the point of fact. But the Council declined to bestow the two hundred pounds, part of five hundred pounds recommended to be given as a reward for ingenuity by the judges. Since that year steam cultivation trials have taken place annually, but as we remarked in 1859, without the aid of prizes, the problem was being worked out in Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire.*

At Chester, in 1858, fifteen years after the week when the exhibition of a few portable steam-engines was looked upon as a novelty, one hundred and twelve were entered for competition. One Lincoln firm alone turns out as many a day as they proposed, when they founded their establishment, to turn out in a week. At Chester the steam ploughing prize of five hundred pounds was awarded. Since that date, and especially at Warwick, in 1859, and at Leeds in 1861, the annual shows have, as fairs, bazaars, and agricultural conversazione, been glorious, but as machinery rewarding agricultural mechanical merit, more and more contradictory and absurd.

Not to be forgotten, before we leave the show, are the agricultural seed-shops, which year after year have grown and grown again in extent and importance. On the arrangement and adornment of these shops for a sale of less than a week many hundred pounds must be expended. We stop opposite a one-storied pavilion of gaily-painted wood, with two wings connected by a long portico, fitted as a shop, where specimens of everything valuable and rare grown in the world and cultivated in Europe may be seen in one shape or another. The one wing is the sleeping apartment of the numerous army of assistants, the other is the office of the chief. Before each is a railed-in plot, planted with evergreens, quite as spacious as many London gardens. In the long alcove devoted to business, the advanced-guard is formed of sacks, open and full of the choicest varieties of every kind of agricultural seed and lentil, supported, as they should be, by accurately-coloured wax models of every kind of root that cattle feed on and men do not despise—mangolds of gigantic size, purple and golden yellow, round as bombs or conical as Whitworth missiles; specimen turnips,

* Farming by Steam. All the Year Round, May 14, 1859.

swedes, and hybrids, whose names and qualities fill one of the many learned volumes in Chiswick type, issued as trade circulars by the firm. Behind, roots, specimens of grain in the ear, wheat from every county and every country, where fine samples, red or white, are to be obtained; barley for beer, oats for horses and Scotchmen, and buckwheat, which peasants eat in France and pheasants in England. Grasses support the grains in brilliant bunches; the Italian rye-grass, a modern introduction, long esteemed in the cheese farms of Lombardy, which, properly watered with liquid manure, gives six famous crops every year; the gigantic Tussock grass from the wind-beaten Falkland Islands, which at one time was to have made the fortune of the cattle-feeders in the Orkney Islands and the Hebrides, but somehow failed; and the Pampas grass, and a dozen tall tufted pasturage grasses for ornamenting clumps on velvet lawns or quick covert for game. Then the long wall of the arcade is covered not only with specimens, but with water-colour drawings of rare and beautiful flowers and pictures of the pines—we beg pardon, the Coniferae—in full growth, whose merits, qualities, and prices also form a volume at once learned and familiar. We may judge something of the quality of the visitors by the preparations made in this shop and museum. Of every valuable or rare and beautiful plant, shrub, or tree exhibited, there is an attempt to give the seed, the flower, the fruit, if any, in dried specimens, or in drawings or in models, and to each specimen is attached the scientific as well as the trade name. It is by degrees that the shop has grown into a museum, stimulating geographical as well as botanical knowledge, and showing our agricultural friends that commerce has laid the whole world under contribution for their mutual benefit.

Spain and Russia, Italy and France, India and China, Egypt and California, and all the rest of the lately United States, have been hunted over to supply grain, lentils, and oil-seeds, roots, shrubs, trees, and flowers for use and ornament for the farm, the garden, the park, the lawn, or the hill-side plantation. The labours of centuries are epitomised in this agricultural pavilion.

We must add a few words at parting on the financial results of the last great show. The prizes given at Oxford amounted to quite eight hundred pounds; at Leeds the amount was exactly three thousand two hundred and forty-two pounds. There was subscribed by the town and neighbourhood five thousand pounds. There entered in five days more than one hundred and forty-five thousand visitors, who paid the first day five shillings each, the second and third days two shillings and sixpence each, the fourth and fifth one shilling each, and altogether nine thousand nine hundred and fifteen pounds. There were sold of implement catalogues five thousand, live-stock catalogues seven thousand eight hundred and fifty-five, at one shilling each. Thus Leeds produced in payments and subscriptions, for one week's exhibition, fifteen thousand five

hundred and fifty-eight pounds twelve shillings, while real business in sales of and orders for stock and implements must have been little under half a million—a very striking example of what private enterprise and public spirit, commerce and amusement, landlords and tenants, men of business and men of rank combined can do in this country to amuse themselves and advance the progress of agriculture. Therefore, Long live the Royal Agricultural Society Exhibition! May its shadow and its substance never be less."

AN ENGLISH-AMERICAN SEA DUEL.

In the year of grace 1813, the United States flag having been planted aboard several English prizes, there was immense self-laudation all through America, and the British lion, formerly so terrible on sea and land, was assumed to be now quite toothless and worn-out, and not worth the trouble of kicking. This sort of thing got to be unbearable to the officers and crews of the British blockading ships off Boston, and Captain Philip Bowes Vere Broke, then commanding His Majesty's Shannon, determined to try what he could do to lower the arrogant tone of the Americans.

The Shannon and her consort, the Tenedos, had long been watching some American ships-of-war—namely, the President, the Congress, and the Chesapeake; but the first two managed to sail away in the darkness, leaving the Chesapeake fitting in new masts and bending new sails in Boston harbour. It was provoking that the others should have slipped from his clutches, thought Captain Philip Broke, but it would go hard with him if the Chesapeake escaped him too; for the gallant captain had it at heart to read the foe a lesson, and make him learn the difference between the past tense and the future. So he loitered and cruised about, and on the 1st of June, 1813, as the Chesapeake stood in the harbour with royal yards across and ready for sea, the Shannon appeared in the offing, and every one knew that before night some bloody work would be done, and that either America would have once more triumphed, or the British flag be once more in the ascendant. Seeing the Shannon all prepared, Captain Broke sent on board a certain Captain Slocum, an American prisoner, with a letter to Captain Lawrence (promoted from the victorious little United States Hornet to the Chesapeake not many days before), which letter began thus: "Sir,—As the Chesapeake appears now ready for sea, I request you will do me the favour to meet the Shannon with her, ship to ship, to try the fortunes of our respective flags." He then went on to pledge his honour that no English ship should interfere. The Chesapeake was superior to the Shannon in size and crew. She carried forty-nine guns, and the Shannon forty-four; she had four hundred and forty men on board (certainly somewhat disaffected because of unpaid prize-money), the Shannon had but three

hundred and ten, made up with some of the crew of the Tenedos, and anything the captain could pick up round about; yet the contest was not unequal, according to his calculation; for were not British pluck and endurance worth more than mere numerical superiority?

On receiving the challenge the Chesapeake "took in her royals and top-gallant sails, hauled in her courses," and came out, slowly and majestically, all gay with flags and colours, bearing, besides her three ensigns, a large white flag at the fore with "Free-Trade and Sailors' Rights" emblazoned in broad bold letters upon it. The Shannon had only a rusty old blue ensign at her peak, though down below she had something better than strips of showy bunting to trust to, having wisely cared for discipline and temper rather more than for seaman's coquetry of ship's apparel. As the Chesapeake came out of the harbour on that bright calm sunny June day, the Shannon filled and stood under easy sail, running a little before the wind, till she got to somewhere about six leagues from Boston light-house, within sight of land, and at signal distance. This was about four o'clock. Up came the Chesapeake gaily, with characteristic insolence firing a gun at the Shannon, as if to bring her to, and to remind her there was to be no skulking that day, and that running easily before the wind was all very well as a display of the ship's paces, but would not do if carried too far. In answer to that iron word so boldly and sarcastically uttered, the Shannon hauled up, and reefed her topsails, "her foresail brailed up, and her maintop-sail flat and shivering," so that the Chesapeake could overtake her; for the ships were now about seven miles apart, and the game was drawing to its culmination. At half-past five the Chesapeake "luffed up" to about half a pistol-shot of the Shannon; then laying herself yard-arm and yard-arm with her foe, poured in her opening broadside. The Shannon returned it with terrible effect. Through mast and sail and rigging and hull that broadside flew and tore, striking down men and officers by scores, doing such deadly work, and so suddenly, that the men faltered, and after a few more of the same kind, grew unsteady at their guns, and worked them wildly and weakly. Then Captain Broke, seeing the enemy, as he says in his despatch, "flinching at his guns," called up his boarders, and the whole living tide of resistless fury and wrath poured like a stream of fire on the deck.

The fight was desperate but short. In fifteen minutes from the time the Chesapeake had fired her first volley the whole thing was done. The thousands and thousands of spectators thronging the hill and lining the shores about Boston—some with watches in their hands, betting on the time it would take their ship to beat the Britisher's—made no question as to how the fight would turn. Their ship was the largest and the heaviest, their men the strongest and most numerous, their luck confirmed, their cause most righteous; the event was known already, according to the wording of

their prophecies; when the smoke, clearing away, showed the Chesapeake, with her three gay ensigns down, and the Union Jack floating in their place. Seventy-seven officers and men lay dead on the Chesapeake deck—a hundred more were wounded; but the Shannon had lost only twenty-three, with only fifty-two wounded. Of these Captain Broke himself was one, but not badly hurt. His head had been laid open with a sabre-cut as he boarded, but he was able to go on with the fight and attend to his duty, while poor Captain Lawrance, of the Chesapeake, had been mortally wounded at an early part of the fray, and his untimely disablement had undoubtedly helped to dishearten his men and make them "flinch at their guns." Furthermore, it was stated by the officers, who survived the fight only to be tried by a court-martial when they got home, that Lawrance called for his boarding party to come forward before the English captain had given his order, but that, by some fatality, a negro bugler had been substituted for the appointed drummer: he, paralysed with terror, had hidden himself below, and when brought on deck and ordered to sound, was so frightened and undone that he could not get out a note. Lawrance then sent a verbal message, but without effect; and the moment after fell back on the deck, shot through the body. It was when he was carried below that the men faltered: and then Captain Broke headed his boarders, and the Chesapeake was his prize. Again, the same officers stated that the British fired a volley down the hatchways and into the cockpit, where the wounded and the vanquished had taken refuge; but this charge was met by a counter-statement that the Chesapeake men had fired up the hatchway after she had struck her flag, and was no longer free to defend herself. More than this, the English accused the Chesapeake of firing on them from the rigging, and of finding a huge barrel of lime standing on the fore-castle with its head knocked off—for what purpose no one could tell, except to fling into the eyes of the enemy, which, if true, was fatal to all ideas of honour or nobleness in American warfare. Also, they said that the shot used was of a diabolical kind: angular jagged bits of iron, broken gunlocks, and copper nails, intended to fester in the body, and produce cruel and unnecessary torments. But it is only fair to the dead brave to state that Captain Broke's despatches say nothing of all this; nor did Wilson Croker in his official announcement in the House; and that the most positive notice we have of these crimes is in James's Naval History, a work so full of party-feeling and injustice to the other side as to be utterly unreliable. Be that as it may, however, the two ships were now under English colours, and sailed away together—Captain Philip Broke, for public thanks, a gold medal, and a baronetcy, and Captain John Lawrance, for a prisoner seaman's grave at Halifax. He died of his wounds on the sixth of June, and the British buried him with all due naval honours, every English captain in the harbour following him to

his grave. This historical fact sufficiently disposes of James's unsupported romance of lime barrels, and the rest. Indeed, Lawrance himself was incapable of a dastardly or dishonourable action. He was a brave and gallant gentleman, and deserved honour of the enemy and renown and gratitude of his country. And he got both.

Captain Broke, too, was a noble-hearted man and gallant officer. All through the American war he distinguished himself by the discipline and high moral tone of his ship. He fought, not for prize-money and personal gain, he used to say, but for glory and his country. Therefore, considering that it demoralised his men as well as weakened his crew to send them home in his prizes, he generally took what was portable and valuable out of the ships to share among his crew, and sunk the rest; preferring to pay the value of what he lost out of his own pocket, that his men should not be discontented and think themselves hardly used, than see them demoralised by the love of gain and pelf. So at least said Mr. John Wilson Croker in the House, and the Times of the 9th of July, 1813, echoes him. Of course there was considerable roaring of the British lion here in England when the despatches came. But on the 11th of September there was a fatal crow on Lake Erie, given by Commodore Perry over Captain Barclay, which had to remain unanswered and unavenged—until to-day.

There was one tragic disaster during the fight of the Shannon and the Chesapeake, worth recording because of its piteous fatality. Lieutenant Wall, of the Shannon, one of the boarding party, was told to haul down the American flags, and hoist instead the brave old bit of blue. By mistake he pulled the wrong halliards, and hoisted the American colours first, upon which the men left on board his own ship thought that the Chesapeake had rallied again, and fired in a broadside, which laid the poor lieutenant low for ever. Another curious circumstance was the explosion of an open cask of musket cartridges left standing on the Chesapeake's cabin. They caught fire and blew up, but did no injury to man or spar. Even the spanker-boom, directly in the way of the explosion, was barely singed; which unusual direction of natural forces was taken as a matter of special Providence in those days, and the Boston divines made the most of it. The names of the Chesapeake's guns, too, are curious. On the main-deck were Brother Jonathan, True Blue, Yankee Protection, Putnam, Raging Eagle, Viper, General Warren, Mad Anthony, America, Washington, Liberty for Ever, Dreadnought, Defiance, Liberty or Death; on the fore-castle were the United Tars, Jumping Billy, Rattler; on the quarter-deck Bulldog, Spitfire, Nancy Dawson, Redcap, Bunker's Hill, Pocohontas, Towser, and Wilful Murder, each name engraved on a square plate of copper, and fastened on the gun-carriages. It would have been

well for the Chesapeake if her guns had answered better to their names, and carried their metal a little more steadily and truly.

As everything connected with America is of interest at the present moment, when it seems as if our cousins want to force us into a hand-to-hand fight if we are to preserve our status among nations or our dignity as men, it perhaps will be pleasant to read of a fight when English courage and English pluck carried it over distinct odds, and to believe that the race has not quite died out yet, but has left a handful of representatives behind it. The other day, when the first intimation of an American captain's desire to speak with an English mail-steamer was by firing a round shot across her bows, and sending a shell to within a hundred yards of her, we have nothing of the gallant spirit which sent courteously-worded challenges, and gave a dead enemy burial with all the honours of war. Fancy the modern rowdies of the North giving any honour at all to the best spirits of the South! In the old war with us the Americans were rude and bragging enough, but they were sucking-doves compared with what they are now, when success in trade and invention has inflated the whole nation like a gigantic balloon, and every one is preparing for the shock of its collapse.

The fact is, the Americans are like a party of overbearing schoolboys, who want a sound thrashing and to be turned down to the lower forms before they can be said to be rebuked. Apparently they are exceedingly ambitious that we should hold the rod, when they may be sure we shall not spare the stripes. Meanwhile we cannot do better than call to mind the Shannon and the Chesapeake—how we fought at odds and beat, simply by superior discipline and pluck. "The mirror of the prophet hangs behind him," and round its border is the legend, "What has been may be again." It is not unlikely that the affair of the Trent and San Jacinto may have other and sterner outgrowths than what have appeared as yet above the earth—outgrowths which will bear the mark of England's shaping hand and the impress of her conquering foot; the thin gay flags, torn and soiled with blood, hauled down, and the Union Jack floating from the top.

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